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Courtiers and Favourites of Royalty

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The Toilette

Etched by Ch. Courtry.

Courtiers and Favourites of Royalty

Memoirs of the Court of France
With Contemporary and Modern Illustrations
Collected from the
French National Archives

BY

LEON VALLÉE
LIBRARIAN AT THE BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE

Memoirs of Duke de Richelieu

IN THREE VOLUMES
VOL. III

Paris
Société des Bibliophiles
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Autograph of the Duke de Richelieu

paris ce Jeudy soir

Je viens en rentrant chés moy, mon cher Molet
de recevoir la lettre cy jointe que M. de Voltaire m'a
écrite : Elle pourra vous surprendre après ce qu'il
vous a écrit dans l'après diner : mais je ne puis vous
dire autre chose dans le moment et vous souhaitter
le bonsoir. Demain si vous voulés me venir voir
et l'aller voir vous même, vous en saurés peut-être
davantage et moy aussi. Cem. mn ne Richelieu

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MEMOIRS OF
MARSHAL DUKE DE RICHELIEU

BY

M. F. BARRIERE

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Up to this point these Memoirs have spoken of some persons with praise and of others with much blame.

The time approaches when we can say only much evil of the statesmen who are about to govern France. A favorite, Mme. de Pompadour, unworthy of the kindnesses of the king, is raising to dignities and to offices

men without virtue and without talents, and is thereby preparing for the future the disorganization of the French government, and is bringing to the court a degree of depravity unknown in its annals until then. It was at the time of her entrance into the court that the total degradation of the government began.

Binet, a relative and friend of Mme. d'Etioles, and, perhaps something more, had secretly prepared the mind of the king for this lady. At the court everything was known, and what was not known was guessed; first, it happened that this Binet, valet-de-chambre of the dauphin, was persecuted from that moment by the devout Boyer, who called him "the corruptor of Louis XV."; but as Binet did not see a very decided love between the king and the lady, he answered Boyer that people slandered him, insisting that if Mme. d'Etioles had come to the court it was only for the purpose of obtaining a situation as farmer-general for her husband, that this having been granted to her, she would not appear there any more.

Boyer intrigued secretly, however, to bring the love of Louis to naught; he said to Binet that he would cause him to be sent away by the dauphin if there was the slightest foundation for the things that were said of him. Binet and Mme. de Tencin held a council for the success of the project of giving Mme. d'Etioles to the king, and Mme. de Tencin put herself in accord with Mme. d'Etioles, and with her brother, the cardinal. From this moment one could see arising at the court two factions, that of the politicians and that of the devotees.

The first was secretly and afterwards openly conducted by Mme d'Etioles, the second by Boyer, and afterwards by the dauphin. The politicians said first of Boyer, that he had brought up the dauphin as a bigot ; but the king, who was very religious, did not enjoy having Boyer attacked by such means. It was added that the dauphin, young and without guile, showed the king but an indifferent affection, and absolutely refusing to enter into his private apartment on account of the very plain talk against the reputation of the king which was openly going on at the dauphin's. This more specious tattle affected the prince. He would even have forgotten Mme. d'Etioles, of whom he did not speak after his first fruitless meeting ; but he believed that he ought not to submit his own inclinations to the prejudices of others, so he determined to call back Mme. de Pompadour.

The party of the devotees and of the dauphin had no lack of reasons for preventing the king from loving Mme. le Normand d'Etioles. It was known that she had very little religion, and that she had received at her house Voltaire, Fontenelle, Cahusac, Montesquieu, Maupertius, and the young Abbé de Bernis, who, little loved by the Jesuits, had recently escaped from a seminary of Sulpicians. Such was the society where laughter and the follies of philosophical reasoning presided in turn, and much gayety was always dangerous to the Jesuitic principles which Fleury had introduced at the court. Boyer, who wished to maintain those principles in the mind of the king, who was then only thirty-six years old and who was so well established in the privacy of the apartments

of the queen, did everything that was necessary to perpetuate it in that of the dauphin also, and he feared especially that the king would lose, by the suggestions of the favorite, his religious opinions, his respect for worship, and that he would imbibe principles contrary to the interests of the clergy of France and to the education that he wished to give the dauphin. Therefore, it happened that before Mme. d'Etioles was finally installed, the party of the favorite and the party of the dauphin found themselves definitely formed.

It was nevertheless observed, before Mme. le Normand d'Etioles was declared mistress, that several weeks had gone by since her first interview with the king. This prince had not been satisfied at the first meeting which he had had with her; he had even almost forgotten her; but Binet, a relative of Mme. d'Etioles reawakened the passion of the prince with great success, assuring him that she was in love with him, and that since her husband had learned of her first fault, nothing remained for her but to die in despair in order not to survive the neglect of the king and not to expose herself to the resentment of the deceived husband by whom she had been worshiped. The king, touched by so much passion, gave orders for her to come on the 22d of April, 1745, to take supper in his little cabinet. Luxembourg and Richelieu took part in this supper, and she never pardoned the latter for having spoken coolly at that time about her charms.

The supper of the two lovers was very gay. She was, however, much pained at being obliged to hide herself

till the following day in the former apartment of Mme. de Mailly; but she had recourse to such dexterity, she was so eloquent, she appealed so well to the heart of the king, who dined there with her, that she made the prince finally promise to restrain the resentment of her husband, to declare her his mistress, to change her name and to support her against the machinations of the dauphin. Finally in order to subdue the party of his son, the king decided that she should be installed and recognized as his mistress in Easter week, in order to show his absolute independence of the principles of the dauphin.

When Mme. le Normand was declared mistress of the king, nothing could equal the sufferings of her husband, M. le Normand d'Etioles. M. de Savalette having invited him in this year to pass the feast of Easter with him at his estate, De Magnanaville, M. de Tourneham, while bringing him back to Paris informed him of the abduction of his wife, already declared mistress of the king. He worshiped his wife and being overwhelmed by extreme anguish, they found it necessary to take all weapons out of his reach for fear he would do some harm in his despair. He was watched constantly, for he attempted at times to get his wife from the castle at Versailles and at other times he proposed other wild expedients.

In his extreme torture he composed a letter which he charge Tourneham, his uncle, to carry to his wife, to call her back to her duty. The favorite put it under the eyes of the king, who said with his ordinary coolness:

"You have a very honest man for a husband, Madame." M. le Normand was not badly described by this. He not only professed in the highest degree this quality, honesty, but he really possessed it and showed it also in his face. He maintained perfect conduct, observed the tone of the best society, the religion of honest people, and had a heart for love and to be loved. Worthy of a wife more virtuous than his, he would have been capable of making his wife feel the attractions of virtue and of bringing her back to him, but he married a woman who had learned from her mother the art of dissimulation. An old plan had destined her to become the mistress of the king and she had received an education to this end. Binet and Mme. de Tencin, who had united a long while before to prepare this dastardly intrigue, had not been successful during the favor of Mme. Chateauroux, when Mme. d'Etioles at the age of seventeen and beautiful as the day roved through the forest of Senart in a rose-colored dress and in lightly built phaetons in order to be better observed by the king.

Mme. d'Etioles lived with her husband four years and became the mistress of the king at the age of twenty-one. She was tall and well built; she had a handsome white skin and what is called a very beautiful face. She had had two children during her marriage. One of them died when six months old, the other was little Alexandrine who, dying at ten years old, was still the source of several intrigues of which we shall speak further on. I have said "during her marriage" because she understood the art of deceiving her husband. The mistress of Binet

The Dauphin, Son of Louis XIV, and His Family

From the painting by Mignard

had arranged several meetings between Mme. d'Etioles and the king to settle matters with him before she was finally installed. When M. d'Etioles was not at home, a carriage of the king came to take her and she went out by the gate of the garden so that it was impossible to have the least knowledge at her home of the intrigue. Before her liaison with the king it was known that she had been loved by M. de Br. (who lived in 1792); she had also been suspected of having other lovers; this shows that she had been born unscrupulous and with very little appreciation of the sweetness of a marriage as happy as that into which she had entered with a virtuous, amiable and gallant man.

Le Normand de Tourneham, uncle of M. d'Etioles, had also had a hand in this business; he loved the mother of the favorite and had lived for a long time with her. It was he who caused his nephew to travel in Normandy at Easter, which was the time agreed upon for the announcement of the king. He was rewarded by receiving the place of director-general of the buildings of the king which at all times was a confidential position. The nephew, too earnest and too little experienced to see that he was the instrument of his uncle's ambition, had married the wife which his benefactor chose for him, to whom he owed a part of his fortune, his place of under-lessee, and finally that of farmer-general. The favorite once installed, and well advised by Binet, Mme. de Tencin, and by many other bright people who were interested to see her in the place, laid down for herself principles of conduct which she never would have been

able to work out or to sustain alone. First she resolved to strengthen herself against any attempt of Boyer, of the dauphine or of the dauphin; she affected at the same time towards the queen, who was hardly capable of thwarting her, a deep respect. By degrees the king allowed herself to be prejudiced by her against his son, and even against the dauphine, who was candid and true in her talk; and Louis who originally had been pleased with the character of his daughter-in-law, did not receive her any longer with the same intimacy; he enjoyed her embarrassment, her timidity, and the state of fear which allowed her only to stammer and tremble in the presence of the king. Then, when he had enjoyed for sometime the state to which he had reduced his daughter-in-law, he tried to bring her back to him by caresses; he made a friendly proposition to her at the end of April, 1745, to come and see him in his little apartment and assured her that he desired very much to receive her there. The young Spanish lady did not wish to offend the king, nor to disobey her husband; so she asked the king the hour and presented herself at a time when she knew that she could not enter.

Boyer had himself alone to reproach for the disagreements which were being stirred up in the royal family; he began to believe he should see, in the establishment of a mistress who was reputed not to be pious, the eclipse of his influence, of his ministry, of his party, and of his principles. He remembered that Mme. de Chateauroux, Mme. de Tencin and others had delivered him over to the sarcasms of Voltaire, and he felt himself

ridiculed in the party of the unbelievers, and in that of the philosophers which was coming out more and more and which censured the priesthood with a loud voice ; and also in the party of the Jansenists, whom he persecuted and from whom he withdrew his good will. Naturally inflexible and eager to sustain his principles, he did not understand the art of making friends at the court. For instance, he offended the Duke de Richelieu, by unbecoming refusals, when he might cause him to lose the confidence of Louis. We will give here an anecdote :—

Mme. de Richelieu, sister of the duke, was abbess *du Trésor*, in the diocese of Rouen, and desired ardently to come nearer her family and to obtain the abbey *aux Bois*. The king had given Mme. de Richelieu this abbey in the year 1745 at the death of Mme. de Carignan ;—but Boyer who had the privilege of the appointment answered the king that he did not know the sister of the Duke de Richelieu, and that he would get information concerning her habits and her character.

There was no lack of devout people ready to say that she had lovers, that she wrote poems, novels and love songs ; thus Boyer triumphed over the Duke de Richelieu. He caused to be published by his confidential priests a list of the gallantries of the abbess invented for the purpose, and in this way took revenge for the poems which he believed the Duke de Richelieu had had composed against him by Voltaire. He did even more ; he persuaded the king to declare to his favorite that his sister should never get the abbey. Let us go back to Mme. d'Etioles.

Hardly was this favorite installed when she boasted that she was useful to the queen. She said that there was always in the mind of Louis a disposition and prejudice that were very unfavorable to the princess, and added that some people tried continually to increase these prejudices by speaking ill about her to the king, while she was convinced herself that the queen had no other desire than to please her husband. To these indiscretions so ill-suited to a court, which is an abode of caution and of lies, Mme. d'Etioles added others; she believed, or affected to believe, that some one had tried to hurt her in the estimation of the queen. In order to learn what opinion she had of her, Mme. de Luynes, having the confidence of the princess, Mme. d'Etioles intended to make her the instrument of an investigation. She stopped her one day and with a look of uneasiness she said to her that she was in a painful situation, since she knew well that she had been slandered to the queen, and begged Mme. de Luynes to inform herself about it. Mme. de Luynes, who spoke of this to the queen, replied to her shortly in the following terms: "The queen has answered me in the best way, madame; that she has nothing against you and that she is very sensible of the intention that you have of pleasing her on every occasion; she has even desired that I inform you of this. I do so with pleasure, madame, very well understanding your sentiments."

Mme. de Pompadour answered this letter by another worthy of her heart and her mind. "You give me back my life, Mme. la Duchesse," she said; "for three days

I have been in agony, they have slandered me dreadfully before M. and Mme. the Dauphin; but they have had kindness enough to allow me to prove to them the falsity of the horrors of which I was accused. It was said some time before this, that the queen had been excited against me. Judge of my despair, I who would give my life for her. It is certain that the more kindness she has for me the more the jealousy of the monsters of this country will be exercised. If she will have the kindness to be on her guard against them and to have me informed of what I am accused, it will not be difficult for me to justify myself."

Mme. d'Etioles, indeed, had recently irritated the party of the dauphin and of the queen by obtaining from the king well marked favors. It was the duty of the nobility to make the nation forget that she was Mme. le Normand d'Etioles when she arrived at the court, and obtained from the king the privilege of having the title Marquise de Pompadour. She gave up at the same time the coat-of-arms of her husband, and substituted for it three towers and gave herself a great livery. The king left her to join the army of Flanders, but every day he sent her couriers. Voltaire was one of her devotees, and the ministers began to wish to please her. Maurepas alone, jealous of the favor that was granted to her, having a delicate sense concerning the decorum of the court, and being wounded by her decided tone, which he called that of a "*grisette*," could not hide his antipathy for any other other mistress nor could he hide it against Mme. le Normand. He ridiculed the

presentation of this "*grisette;*" he complained about her manners; he learned the art of imitating her *bourgeois* speech, and he heaped upon her all that ridicule which he handled with so much facility and grace.

Hardly was Mme. de Pompadour installed than she desired to be informed of all the favors which the mistresses of the kings who were predecessors of Louis had enjoyed. She had heard it said that Dangeau and the Duke de Saint-Simon had preserved the details of them in their memoirs; she had extracts given her, and obtained a promise from Louis that she should be treated as they were.

Louis XIV. had had for Mme. de Maintenon the most distinguished consideration, because he wanted to prove that she was his wife, without telling it. Mme. de Pompadour exacted, as mistress, what Mme. de Maintenon had obtained as an undeclared wife. Being the first who had mixed herself up in the affairs of the government, she had wished to govern France; Mme. de Pompadour wished to have the same influence, and submit the whole court to the same ceremonial. She read in the manuscripts of Saint-Simon that the favorite of Louis XIV., being seated upon an elegant easy chair, hardly rose when monseigneur or monsieur entered; she did not go out of her way for princes or princesses, and admitted them only after they had asked an audience, or when she commanded them to see her for a reprimand. Mme. de Pompadour imitated her as much as she could in all this and permitted herself great impertinences with the princes of the blood. They

nearly all submitted with meekness, except the Prince de Conti, who spoke to her with coldness, and the dauphin, who openly despised her. In order to enjoy the ceremonial and the privilege of a favorite, she had begun by being presented at the court, notwithstanding the resentment of the ladies of the queen, who at one time when the king was still at the army, burst out against her, but Louis, who was informed of it, compensated her for what she had to suffer from the jealousy of the court, by writing love letters to her every day. On the 9th of July, 1745, she had already received eighty such letters from her lover, with a seal on which were inscribed the words: *Discret et Fidèle.* She was well indemnified when, after the campaign, the Princess de Conti desired to have the honor to present herself, and declared so to the queen, assuring her that the king wished it to be so.

This scandalous ceremony took place on the 15th of September, 1745, at six o'clock in the evening. Vile and cringing courtiers, devoted to servitude, filled all the apartments and rooms that day. The king blushed on account of it, but "*the grisette*" carried out her part with impudence.

Curiosity attracted many people to the queen's apartments, and it was indeed very interesting to see this virtuous and amiable princess obliged to receive with good grace the public concubine of her husband. The whole city of Paris, which was informed beforehand of this presentation, was in great anxiety to know with what words the queen would address her. It was agreed

beforehand in the capital, that nothing would be discussed at the home of the princess except the dresses of Mme. de Pompadour, a common subject of conversation amongst women, when they have nothing else to say to one another. But the queen, being informed that they had already arranged their conversation, had the kindness to say something more flattering to Mme. de Pompadour; but this obliged the favorite to speak of some illustrious lady with whom the queen was acquainted but whom Mme. d'Etioles did not know; the good queen said to her: "Give me if you please news about Mme. de Saissac. I was so glad to see her sometime ago in Paris." Mme. de Pompadour, who had learned only a few speeches by heart, was unable to adjust them to this delicate attention of the queen; she stammered and then said abruptly: "Madame, I have the greatest desire to please you."

A few days afterwards, when the king had become ill at Choisy, the queen, obliged to go there to get information about his health, had still the kindness, against all rules, to dine with Mme. de Pompadour. The fear of being ill-treated, the certainty of showing by this conduct, resignation to the will of God and also her resolution to suffer in silence the little *bourgeoise*, to use the expression of the times, who had robbed her of the husband whom she still loved, were the motives of the queen's conduct. All the ladies who were in Choisy dined with the queen and the concubine, the example of the princess having blunted their delicacy.

This great favor however brought upon Mme. de

Pompadour the jealousy of all the gentlemen of the court. They wanted to know who she was, who her husband was, and what right she had to take part in these affairs. The genealogy of "*the grisette*" was searched, and it was discovered that her father had been one of the principal clerks of the brothers Pâris, who was persecuted by Fagon, intendant of the finances, who, not being strong enough to fight against them, attacked Poisson, their principal clerk, and presided, himself, over the commission which was established in the year 1726 to judge the affair. This Poisson was condemned to be hanged; but as such decrees were never carried out when one had influence and money, especially of the sort that these four brothers had, Poisson had an opportunity to escape to Hamburg.

It has been mentioned above how the Commander de Thianges was situated in regard to Stanislaus in the year 1733. Poisson, watchful for an opportunity to return, related to him his adventure at Hamburg, and begged of him to take an interest in him and to ask the comptroller-general to permit him to appeal. Efforts had been made several times with the Cardinal de Fleury without success. Grevenbrock, representative of the Elector of the Palatinate, a friend of Mme. de Saissac, busied himself also with this as much as he could; and Mme. de Saissac herself used so much influence with the Cardinal de Fleury to get him to permit the revision of this affair that in the end the cardinal-minister allowed him to be examined. The sentence, from the result of many intrigues, solicitations, and the money of the

brothers Pâris, was repealed in the year 1741 by another commission. Thus the daughter of an employee condemned to be hanged for having stolen from the king, was called to share his couch with him, and Mme. de Pompadour, who obtained letters of nobility for her father, took care to have inserted in these letters, in order to white-wash him, that the king had granted them to him for having rendered services in the provision department. While the jealousy caused by the raising of Mme. de Pompadour brought out these anecdotes, Mme. de Modena, Madame the Princess de Conti, and Mlle. de Sens considered it an honor to appear in public as her satellites. After such examples the court of the favorite could only increase every day; the titled ladies did all they could to please her although they detested her. The queen endeavored to show her kindness by some new slight attentions which were full of delicacy, and the king tried also to please her by increasing every day the presents which he made her, and these were so great that in the year 1745 on the 30th of October it was known that she already had at that time 180,000 livres of income, outside of the income of her estate, de Pompadour.

She brought the king to such a pass that he came to call on her every morning; remained there until mass; then he returned after her and took a soup and a cutlet in her company; for in the month of October, 1745, the king did not take any regular dinner. He remained until six o'clock and on the days of hunting or of the council, he came before and returned afterwards. How-

ever, the king did not really love her; she had one of those minds and characters which subjugate men. She understood the art of speaking with authority and of submitting feeble minds to herself, and though she had but recently arrived at a court where another kind of language was spoken, and though she employed those common expressions which wounded the delicacy of Louis, she had, nevertheless, the art of dominating him entirely as soon as she thoroughly understood his nature.

She affected, for example, to speak of the Poissons, her parents, in order not to appear proud, but the king felt offended by it. One day she even asked a monk, a cousin of hers, to call on her; he was a most stupid fool of the Order of St. Francis. Mme. de Pompadour intended to raise him above his position; but having found him without ambition and without merit, she said publicly: "He's a nice *tool* this cousin! Let them take away this *engine* from under my eyes." The "engine" and the "tool" were not forgotten and the court, secretly scandalized and jealous of the favor of Mme. de Pompadour, did not cease talking about the "tool" and the "engine" for many a day.

The king was really grieved on account of it; and when the Duke de Richelieu, the Count de Maurepas and other intimate courtiers spoke to him, he answered: "An education must be given her and I shall entertain myself in giving it." Mme. de Lauraguais, who talked about everything and who didn't like to be supplanted by a handsomer woman of lower birth, pointed out all the mistakes of "*the grisette;*" therefore she incurred her

hatred and the new favorite took care to keep her away from the little apartments, as much as she could. She also endeavored to take away from the king the intimate confidence that he had in the Duke de Richelieu, and she united herself with Soubise, who had a softer character; but the king, who had need of the duke was never willing to sacrifice him entirely for the sake of pleasing his mistress.

Her ambition for wealth and desire to prosper her own creatures carried her soon so far as to drive away the most honest of the ministers in order to have a successor for him, who would be devoted to her. Orri, comptroller-general, did not come, like Monmartel, to lay at her feet the treasures of the government; so she resolved to have him sent away, and, though it was difficult to cause this disgrace because Orri was loved and esteemed by the king and by the nation on account of his scrupulous honesty, she succeeded, or at least had a great influence, in bringing about his dismissal. Happily the king who had not yet lost the principles which Fleury had inculcated didn't allow her to bring in one of her own choice. Orri was reproached for making his brother-in-law first minister of the King of Poland at Lunéville, and one of the brothers of this latter he had made envoyé of the king at the court of this same prince; he was further reproached for having procured the regiment of Lorraine for a third brother, and giving an abbey to one of the sons of the first prince, who was only twelve years old. He was reproached with much more justice for having given the intendance of Paris to his nephew, Berth-

ier de Sauvigny, a man without experience and too young; but no fraudulent practices were charged to him, nor any want of knowledge. And therefore he ought to have been pardoned for having given away subaltern places or such as were foreign to the affairs of the finances, or he should have been left in his situation and his relatives been dismissed; but it had been resolved that he should be sent away and even the will of Louis would have been set aside if such a step had been necessary. The brothers Pâris, bankers of the court, who were able to put disorder into the finances by acting with the favorite, went so far as to say that they would not do any more business as long as he was kept in his place. Knowing that they were necessary they had decided to fortify themselves well and to hold out firmly against the minister, if he did not leave his place. He had refused to sign the contracts for them concerning the supplies of the army and in the end he was sacrificed for them.

The good Frenchmen, though few, who observed the progress of events at Versailles, judged henceforth that the king had neither any character nor will, since he allowed his most useful and most valuable minister to be sent away by his mistress. Indeed, the prince wrote Orri a letter full of expressions of esteem; he gave him permission to retire on account of his health, but in such a way, however, as to make him understand that this permission was a very much softened royal order. The minister was neither angry nor astonished on account of this; he sustained his disgrace like an honest man, and had the courage to tell the king that his ruin had been

resolved upon in order to rob the royal treasury. Then, taking advantage of the emotion of the king, he excluded from his place all the masters *de requêtes*, all the intendants, all the councilors of state who were intriguing in order to get his place, and whose dishonesty he had discovered while he held his high office. He himself had worked only for the prosperity of France, and while caring neither for the honors nor the power attached to his place, he feared the misfortunes which were threatening the royal treasury. But neither the concubine, nor the priests had influence enough to appoint any one to take his place; the king, himself, chose and appointed De Machault intendant of Valenciennes (who was still alive in July, 1792), who had rendered to the Count de Saxe great service during the war, and was protected by him. Orri approved of the choice, and said to the king that he had merit, intelligence, honesty and courage. Orri had been minister of the finances for sixteen years, and offered the king his services to initiate De Machault; but Mme. de Pompadour hastened his dismissal, while the public, becoming indignant on account of this summary disgrace, began to curse Mme. de Pompadour, and every honest man about the court went to call on Orri at Bercy, whither he had withdrawn.

As to M. de Machault, here are the verses which appeared in his honor in the year 1749:—

Par un choix imprévu chargé du ministère,
Joseph fut pour l'Égypte un ange tutélaire;
LeNil de tous ses dons se plut à le combler;
Il fut juste, prudent, et plein de vigilance,
Pur, désintéressé, tel qu'on le voit en France,
Ce sage qui devait un jour lui ressembler.

M. de Machault preserved France from the famine with which it was threatened in the year 1749; he had ordered grain from Barbary, in expectation of the shortage in the crop and he carried himself in his ministry with the strictest integrity.

In order to indemnify his favorite who was thus thwarted of having one of her own creatures in the ministry of finances, the king gave to her brother, the Marquis de Vandières, who was called *le Marquis d'Avant-hier*, the reversion of the charge of general director of the buildings. A few days afterwards on the 24th of December, 1745, her mother, Madame Poisson, died very suddenly, and the king, to please his favorite, proposed to postpone the voyage to Marly, for which the ladies of the court had incurred much expense. Mme. de Pompadour knew the consequences of stopping the court for the sake of Mme. Poisson and obtained from the king the promise that the voyage should not be suspended; but the prince, being bewitched—to make use of an expression which is found in the letters of the time—did not stop until he had shown his attachment by generosity such as was never before shown in any such degree to his former favorites. The king often took supper with the Marquise de Pompadour, and when he met the Marquis de Vandières at her house, he asked him to take supper with him. One evening he gave him the reversion of the direction of the buildings, of which Tourneham was the titulary possessor.

Concerning the fortune of the favorite it is well known how much she must have cost the state. We have

mentioned that six months after the declaration of the love of the king she already had 180,000 livres of income, an apartment at the court, another in each of the royal palaces, and the Marquisat of Pompadour. In the year 1746, she bought from Roussett, the estate of La Selle for the sum of 150,000 livres, and spent 60,000 at the castle. In the year 1746, the king gave her 750,000 livres more to acquire the castle and the estate of Crécy, and he gave her besides 500,000 livres from the increase of the charge of treasurer of the stables, which had been until then but 100,000 écus, and he created a second of 500,000 livres to her profit. These acquisitions had already brought public reproof upon him; it was said that his concubine must be very accomplished in the art of seduction to change to such an extent a prince who was naturally stingy and who had for several years made use of the fortune of the first of his mistresses.

The first of January, in the year 1747, it was noticed that the king gave madame a handsome collar of diamonds, and Christmas presents to the dauphine and Mme. Adelaïde. Mme. de Pompadour had handsome tablets garnished with diamonds, in the centre of which was the coat-of-arms of the king and in the corners, one of the three towers which Mme. de Pompadour had chosen for her coat-of-arms. In the tablets she found a check for 150,000 livres payable to bearer.

The 5th of March following, Vandières obtained from the king the captaincy of Grenelle and 100,000 livres of reserve commission which belonged to his charge.

In the year 1749, Mme. de Pompadour asked for a

mansion at Fontainebleau; the king gave her 100,000 écus for this purpose. The same year she asked the king for the castle of Aulnay, in order to increase the charms of Crécy, and the prince added to that a gift of 400,000 francs. In the year 1750, she wished to acquire Brimborion, above Bellevue; the king bought it, and this cost the treasury 200,000 écus, for the castle and the outfit.

In the month of March, 1751, Mme. de Pompadour, having first provided for herself, decided to give her father, Poisson, the estate of Marigny. La Peyronie had bequeathed it to Saint-Come. The king acquired it, and gave Saint-Come 10,000 livres compensation, and the estate passed to M. Poisson.

In 1752 the insatiable favorite wished to have the estate of Saint-Remi, adjoining that of Crécy. This new acquisition increased her fortune only by 12,000 livres of income; but on the 24th of July in the same year the king gave her 100,000 écus for the purpose of acquiring a mansion at Compiègne.

In 1753 the splendid mansion of the Count d'Évreux in Paris, in the faubourg Saint-Honoré, pleased Mme. de la Pompadour; she spoke of it to the king, who gave her on the first of April 500,000 livres to buy it. Not finding it worthy of her, she had repairs and new furniture made, all of which doubled the sum. The Parisians burst out this time against the courtesan, and during the night covered the walls of the mansion with pasquinades. The poor people who were sweating their blood to feed the ambition and pomp of "*the grisette*," did still more the following day. Seeing that, in order to make the

garden of this mansion larger, a little portion of that space, which was then called *le Cours*, and which has been named since the *Champs-Elysées* was taken, they gathered together and fell with fury upon the workmen.

We should never finish if we gave in detail the cost of all the mansions which she had in Paris, in Fontainebleau, in Versailles, and the castle Bellevue ; one of these places alone has since satisfied princes of the blood of France ; in a word the fortune of Mme. de Pompadour had become so immense that it was incalculable.

One can estimate by these details what appreciation she had for artists and what to think of the protection she accorded the arts. Incapable of feeling that art offers an inspiration to elevated souls, she never saw in the interesting men who were moved by genius, anything more than decorators of her palaces. Artists served her for two purposes : first for the decoration of her palaces, and then for the establishment of the reputation, which she was eager to acquire of loving the arts, and of knowing the value of them and of protecting them. It is well known that her heirs made scandalous profits with the immortal works of Vernet and Pigale and the most illustrious artists of her time. She had bought them at an ordinary price ; they were sold again for double and treble, and often these artists, who were attached to their work, bought them back.

La Tour alone paid treble the common price for that beautiful portrait, which was six feet high, a masterpiece of pastel-painting and which the connoisseurs of the time went to admire in the salon of the Louvre.

The masterpieces of the most famous artists were procured for "*the grisette*," until her surroundings rivalled the palaces of many of the crowned heads. Callous, in the bosom of her immense wealth, to the lot of the poor and unfortunate, it dawned upon her for the first time, in the year 1746, that she had not as yet performed any act of charity, and she then had a hospital built for the poor. The king, being in Choisy in the month of September, went to Crécy with the Abbé de Bernis, the comptroller-general, and Berrier, a lieutenant of the police, to see this hospital. There were accommodations for forty-eight patients who were nursed and cared for by the Soeurs Grises. The newspapers reported this charitable act, and some courtiers spread the report that in her enthusiasm Madame de Pompadour had sold her precious stones to help the unfortunate. Indeed it is true she had taken a thousandth part of her fortune for their relief.

An anecdote of Bellevue deserves mention here. One day Madame Pompadour waited for the king in the enchanted castle of Bellevue, which had cost so much, and as he entered she received him in an apartment at one end of which there was an immense hot-house and a terrace filled with most beautiful flowers; this in the midst of a very severe winter. Since fresh roses, lilies and pinks prevailed there, the king, in ecstasies, enthusiastically admired the beauty of this flower garden, and upon learning that these vases, these roses, pinks, lilies, and their stems, in fact, everything was of porcelain, and the odor of these different flowers was produced by vola-

tilized essences, could hardly express his admiration for the fruitful and happy imagination of madame. At length she was accused of wishing to buy from the King of Prussia the principality of Neufchâtel, that she might retire thither in case she should fall into disgrace, or in case of Louis' death. It is even affirmed that she had consulted this prince as to the price of the sovereignty, which, as she said, she intended to assure for the kingdom of France after her death. The Princess des Ursins had previously entertained a similar ambition.

The fear of the king's death and her own disgrace were her greatest torments. She saw the first mistress, Mme. de Mailly, respected throughout Paris, because by her acts of charity she caused the people to forget her former disgrace. Madame de Pompadour, on the contrary, foresaw, in case of her own disgrace, the disdain of the courtiers who now cringed before her at the court, and the just revenge of the aroused people of Paris, even more bitter than the disdain of the courtiers. The illness of the king at Metz, the attitude of the priest who stood at his bedside, the hatred of the dauphin and Louis' affectation of remorse, were, for her, sources of a lasting anxiety. She had indeed subjugated the king; but when she showed a too decidedly expressed ascendency over him, he resented it angrily.

To arose the king from his natural melancholy, Mme. de Pompadour sought to find some congenial occupation for him. The favorite of Louis XIV. had found one in the details of ecclesiastic affairs, in the Jesuitic quarrels, and in the rivalries of the legitmate and legitimatized

princes; the favorite of Louis XV. at length conceived an original idea. She sought to interest the king in comedies, found plays which pleased him, and chose comedians from among the courtiers. By this means she warded off dangerous intrigues; kept the prince busy, and assigned the parts to courtiers whose sole desire was to please her. Mme. de Pompadour herself who was naturally an actress, and who had constantly practiced deceit in her own life, played the principal parts, and won the greatest applause.

In the month of January, 1747, *le Tartufe* was given, and several other pieces. Mme. de Sassenage, Mme. de Pons, Mme. de Brancas assisted her, and the Duke de Nivernais (living still in the year 1792), Meuse, d'Ayen, La Vallière, and Croissy were the comedians.

At first only a small number of spectators were admitted to these comedies. Vandières and Tournham came there to admire the favorite in silence. The Marshal de Saxe, the two Champcenetz, Mme. de Estrades and Mme. de Roure, were also admitted. When *Tartufe* was played in 1747 it was given almost secretly. The Marshal de Noailles had expressed an earnest desire to be present, but together with the Duke de Gesvres and the Prince de Conti he was refused. Neither could the Count de Noailles obtain admission.

In that play of Dufrény's entitled *le Mariage fait et rompu*, the Count de Maillebois succeeded wonderfully in his rolê of president. The Marquis de Voyer, Croissy, Clermont-d'Amboise, and Duras also received great

applause, and the Duke of Nivernais excelled The Duke de La Vallière directed these little theatricals.

Comedy was soon an effective instrument in the hands of the favorite; the gentlemen and ladies exerted their best efforts to please. La Vallière, for example, was found to play the bailiffs wonderfully, and also the Duke de Duras. Mme. de Brancas succeeded well in the part of the miller's wife, and Mme. de Pompadour in that of Collet. The Ladies de Livri and de Pons were very pleasing in their part as the miller's daughters. Clermont-d'Amboise, Courtanvaux, Luxembourg, d'Ayen, and Villeroy sang beautifully.

On the 4th of February, the Duke de Chartres, d'Argenson, Coigny, Croissy, the Marquis de Gontaud, De Guerchy, and Champcenetz were admitted. The Abbé de Bernis was sometimes seen there, but seldom did the President Henault, Ogier, the Marshals de Saxe and De Duras, Grimberghan and the Marshals de Coigny and De Noailles attend. It is interesting to read in the diaries of Richelieu and other courtiers how jealousy resulted from the issuing of these invitations.

Mme. de Pompadour was wont to invite those whom she desired to accompany her on her journeys to her estates or on sleighing parties. In the month of February, 1751, the king and Mme. de Pompadour had invited the dauphin, Mme. Adelaide, Mme. Victoire, Mme. Sophie, Mme. Louise, the Duke de Chartres, the Prince de Turenne, the Duke d'Ayen, Maillebois, the Marquis de Villeroy, Tallaru and the Count de Lorges. For the trip to Crécy in the month of June 1751, they invited

Theatre at Versailles

Engraved by Jas. B. Allen after picture by F. Mackenzie

the Ladies de Choiseul-Romanet, d'Estrades and de Livri and M. the Duke de Chartres, the Count de Clermont, de Turenne, de Brionne, de Sponheim, de Soubise, de Belle-Isle, de Saint-Florentin, d'Argenson, de Puisieux, de Chevreuse, de Luxembourg, de La Vallière, de Duras, de Chaulnes, de Villeroy, d'Estissac, d'Ayen, de Thomond, de Castries, de Gontaud, d'Armentières, de Croissy, de Ségur, de Sorches, de Langeron, de Pons, de Basehy, and de Frise.

In the year 1752, Mme. de Pompadour resumed her interest in private theatricals, when *Vénus et Adonis*, an heroic ballet of Collet,—music by Mondonville—was given. The dancers were Mme. de Hesse, de Beuvron, de Courtanvaux, and Melfort. The Chevalier de Clermont played the part of Mars, Mme. de Pompadour that of Vénus; the Vicomte de Chapot that of Adonis, and Mme. Marchais impersonated Carite.

This play, which pleased the king, was often repeated; Mme. de Pompadour playing the part of Vénus; Mme. Marchais (living still in the year 1792), that of love; the Duchess de Brancas, Diane, and the Duke d'Ayen that of Adonis.

The people grumbled on account of these entertainments, which put the state to an immense expense on account of the extraordinary feasts which they occasioned, and because of the construction of a play-house in the year 1748, for the private pleasures of the king.

In the year 1753, *Le Mercure galant* was given at Fontainebleu and the queen resented the expressions referring to herself and to mesdames. The Duke de

Richelieu pretended to attribute this discontentment to the reflections of Mme. de Villars, and had copied upon separate tickets each of the passages of this comedy which were disapproved by the queen.

After the feats, hunting parties and gaming, the king was wont to enter the apartments of the madame and amuse himself making his coffee or reading the news which came to him from the bureau where the seals were broken. When pressing affairs of government came up and he was obliged to follow the movements of his army, not even this interfered with his pleasure. If the minister, read a memorandum of affairs in general he would turn towards Mme. de Pompadour and laugh; and when the minister paused the king would add, "Speak on, I hear you very well."

CHAPTER LXXIII.

Attempted assassination of Louis XV. on the 5th of January, 1757.—Difficulty in discovering the causes of this event.—Parliament attributes it to the Jesuits.—The Jesuits attribute it to parliament.—The court appears neutral in the mutual accusations concerning this affair.

THE terror which the crime of Damiens spread suddenly over Paris was still rife when the enemies of the Jesuits, or to speak more correctly, the majority of the capital of France, said, "It is a crime committed by the clergy and the Jesuits."

The king wavered between the parliament and the Jesuits; there was no person so decidedly in favor of the latter party as the dauphin, a devout and fanatic prince.

The Jesuits, accused in France of regicide, and of having taught the doctrine of tyrannicide, said just the opposite. "They cannot say this time that the Jesuits had anything to do with the crime of Damiens. We love the king; he is a Christian king. Parliament, which has always opposed the royal will, having been exiled and dissolved, could alone have instigated this criminal attempt."

From that time the people of France divided themselves into two parties, each accusing the other of the attempted assassination.

The court, which had evaded the clergy and the magistracy, and which had demanded silence from everybody, chastising sometimes the one, and sometimes the other party, according to circumstances, did not change its opinion with regard to the crime; it resolved to consider Damiens either a fanatic or a man who had been led astray; the crime should be punished but the cause hidden; and while the grand chamber asked to "judge the criminal"; while the exiled magistrates were eager to unravel the mystery, while Machault worked hard to learn the exact truth, and the Jesuits employed underhand means to produce evidence to avert the storm with which they believed themselves threatened, the court left to Maupeau the first president, who belonged to the grand chamber, composed of peaceful magistrates and courtiers, the delicate judgment of this affair. Maupeau, the father, had orders to skillfully evade the secret causes, to discard everything that could lead to them, to repress indiscreet curiosity, but to prove the crime and to punish the criminal. It was then that in France this third party sprang up, that of the courtiers, which resolved to regard Damiens as a man who had been misled rather than a conscious villain. The Bastille was filled with citizens who spoke with too much freedom concerning this event.

Impartial historians cannot adopt these views of the court; they are ready to prove that Damiens, instead of acting spontaneously had prepared himself for a long time for this crime; and, moreover, that it was the work of the clergy and of the Jesuits.

Not without reason were the Jesuits accused of being the secret authors of this attempted assassination. Their ambition to rule France as in the time of the former king; the influence of their principles and of Fleury; their still more powerful reign during the ministry of Boyer; the decadence of their authority and of the ministry of the Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld, minister of the *feuille des bénéfices*, who tempered their quarrelsome and fanatic minds, and who died afterwards from the effect, as it is said, of a Jesuitic poison; the hope of ruling soon in the name of the dauphin, who was so devoted to the order of the Jesuits; the fear, if the king should live, of seeing him abandoned to Mme. de Pompadour, who was detested by all the Jesuits: all these are convincing evidences that the Jesuits were the real authors of the crime.

Every day during the course of the proceedings, new circumstances were brought to light which confirmed the idea that this assassination should be laid to the charge of the Jesuits. Father Latour, a Jesuit, was a director of the father of Damiens; another Jesuit named Delaunay, his protector, had procured him a place. The regicide had been received as a boarder in the college of the Jesuits in Bethune, and had been educated by them. He entered their college as valet of Louis le Grand in Paris in the year 1735, remained there fifteen months and heard the political and theological debates of the Jesuits, who were at that time stirring up the first fanatic quarrels under the ministry of Fleury. The Jesuits, who had expelled him on account of insubordination, took him

back for fifteen months in the year 1739, where he remained until his marriage in the year 1740.

When asked, during the course of the proceedings, why he had served the Jesuits whose orders were so severe for such a long time, to declare what he understood by their doctrine and whether it was to become familiar with its teachings that he had entered the house, he replied to his interrogators, "I have nothing to say." There were found upon the regicide at the time of the offense a prayer-book and the instrument of his crime. "My soul is in safety," he said to the duchess who spoke to him concerning the darkness of his deed. When asked what he understood by this, he added, "I have nothing to answer, I will tell it to my confessor," and he asked for an oratorian. It is well known that the oratoire was a body hostile to the Jesuits; such a confessor was denied him. It was said among the oratorians and all the enemies of the Jesuits that they had given the communion to Damiens before he left Assas.

During the excitement which this desperate event created, the Jesuits were anxious that the crime be laid to the officers of the parliament. They even had the cleverness to introduce into the prison cell of the assassin, Belot, one of their followers, who, having gained his confidence and captured his good will, gave him a rule of conduct to follow during his trial.

From this very moment Damiens was no longer the same man. "Look out for the dauphin, see that he does not go out," he shouted when he was taken. "His life is not in safety; the same fate is reserved for him,

yes I have accomplices," he said, "they are very far away. I would like to speak to the dauphin, I would reveal many things. I have assassinated the king on account of religion, and because the people perish;" he also said to a working man who asked him the names of his accomplices: "If I should name them, how many people would be accused!"

But after the examination of Belot, *exempt of the guardes de la Prévôté*, Damiens showed only a false character. Before the proceedings there were in his expressions fanaticism and traits of a desperate character; but during the trial he manifested remarkable shrewdness, was often sarcastic and especially careful to reveal only what he wished. The great question as to the source of the crime lay between the Jesuitic clergy and the parliament. Damiens had laid the event to both. Belot made him write to Louis that famous letter in which Damiens declares that the king's life and that of his son are both in danger if the king does not take the part of the people.

Let us analyze this sentiment. Its object is to free the dauphin of every suspicion of complicity, since it threatens him also; but what had the king's son to fear from the people, whose reign they most eagerly desired. Damiens declared further that his crime was the result of the discharge of the officers of the parliament. He added on the other hand that if the priest should continue to refuse the sacraments their lives would be in danger. "The archbishop," he said, "is the cause of the whole trouble, because he has refused the sacraments to

the people." Damiens involved also officers of the parliament in this affair, namely, Lambert, Clement, Guillaumie, three other councilors and the presidents De Rieux and De Massi.

The enemies of the Jesuits rose against Belot when this letter was published, and declared the absurdity of supposing that magistrates spontaneously dismissed should have found a murderer all ready for their purpose. They affirmed, on the contrary, what was very true, that a Jesuit was Damien's confessor, that he went often to their house for communion, and that they could have prepared the blow far ahead, and chosen a favorable moment in order to hide a crime which they considered necessary for an absolute return of their power. Hence came their resolution not to absolutely attribute the crime to the parliament, since the Jesuits found themselves implicated by circumstantial evidence, but to attribute it to both the Jesuits and the parliament in order to hide the true cause, offering two channels for public suspicion. Belot saw Damiens several times, and during his second visit mentioned the name of the councilors in the parliament in order to balance the opinions of the two causes which ostensibly had to be alleged in order to account satisfactorily for this attack. There are, however, ample proofs that the dismissed officials were not the accomplices of Damiens, since before the dismissals Damiens had said in the Netherlands in the year 1756: "I shall go back to France; I shall die there; the greatest man on earth will also die there, and he will hear of me."

The Jesuits, secretly in despair at finding themselves still accused of this assassination, made every possible effort to turn the accusations against the parliament. All the Jesuits in the kingdom and their intimate partisans seemed to unite with one another in attributing to the legislature the crime of Damiens. The court and Damiens appeared, on the contrary, to be tacitly in league to persuade the public that parliament had no complicity in the assassination. Notwithstanding his deceit and his resolution to constantly practice evasion, Damiens, who confided more to the people of his class, and who was very reserved with his judges, said one day to one of the sergeants who guarded him: "I could make your fortune." "My fortune!" answered this sergeant, "what could you do in your present condition to make my fortune?"

"I should only have to tell you my secret," answered Damiens. The sergeant rendered an account of this to the Duke de Biron, who spoke of it afterwards in the fourth meeting of the peers, after having ordered the sergeants to keep record of his words. Upon another occasion he asked one of the sergeants if it were he who would torture him. The sergeant answered him that he should only be present. "Well!" answered Damiens, "you will see that suffering will not make me speak."

On the 26th of February Damiens asked what day of the month it was, and upon being told that it was the 26th, continued: "Then they have broken their word." He also said: "Could I have reached my horses, they would not have known who made the attack."

During the fifth session of the peers on Wednesday, March 9, 1757, it was decided to examine the persons who were arrested for the crime. The princes of the blood, the peers, the grand'-chambre of the parliament were charged with the judgment. The Prince de Conti said that he believed it absolutely necessary to discover the underlying cause of the assassination. He said that he was eager to discover the mystery of this affair since he had observed what transpired at the trial; he reminded them of the words which Damiens had spoken in the prison,—that he could make a fortune by revealing his secret; he made the observation that fanaticism of any kind could go so far as to inspire dissimulation in order to save accomplices; he said that a man born with a firm character was prepared for torture. Conti concluded from that that it would be necessary to gather together all the proofs of which the Duke de Biron had kept a record, to have the record communicated, and to hear what information his guards could give in order to form judiciary proofs. He said that it was necessary to study the character of Damiens before analyzing his crime; to examine his inconsistencies, his tricks under the present circumstances, and to question the servants of the houses where he had lived and with whom he had been on intimate terms. "These investigations," said the prince, "can only produce a proof of complicity or non-complicity, but they surely will calm the king, the excited people, and the whole nation. A continued conspiracy would be fearful to think of. I am very much distressed to see the chamber so little advanced in

knowledge of a conspiracy, and so little inclined to take proper measures to discover whether or not it exists in this case."

Though this was a sensible speech, Biron, who had received instructions from the court, and the other gentlemen did not approve of it. Biron said that his sergeants who had guarded Damiens owed account to the king alone, or to himself as their colonel. The Prince de Conti answered that the point was not to gather military facts and that his authority as colonel was not in question; that as soldiers they were under his orders, but as common citizens they must submit to justice, which exercised in this question the rights of the king; and that they must render an account of any remarks which might escape the criminal whom they were guarding; he said that in the record of the observations of the guards there might be points that would strike others, though M. de Biron might not be influenced by them. Biron replied that in this record there were blasphemies, and profligate curses, which were little in accordance with the respect due such a high assembly as the parliament, and that he would communicate to the procureur-general the important remarks entered in the record; but the Prince de Conti, who had great presence of mind, replied that he would be satisfied if the articles in accordance with decency should be read, observing that indecencies which were connected with the trial could be heard by the judges personally. There were only seven votes in favor of reading this record; and this proved that the parliament, which was

then composed of the princes, the peers, and the grand'-chambre, who were all interested in following the ideas of the court which desired that the causes of the crime be enshrouded in mystery, did not wish to make conclusive discoveries, but to keep within the limits of the proof of the crime and, later, of the punishment. A vote was then taken as to whether the persons who were intimate with Damiens should be heard. Not one affirmative vote was cast and the Prince de Conti, when his turn came to give his opinion, said smilingly that he would give it against himself, so that it could be said that the proposal which he had made to examine those who might be able to discover accomplices, had been rejected unanimously. However, he persisted that his proposal was in perfect order and that he was very sorry it did not pass.

All Paris was disgusted upon learning that parliament intended to limit itself to the proof of the crime and its punishment without going to the bottom of the cause; but parliament was as reserved during the proceedings against Ravaillac as it was during those against Damiens. The same interests seem to have guided the parliament in the year 1757 as in the year 1610. In order to confuse the rumors of the capital, Pasquier, reporter of the trial, who was devoted to the court in this affair, asked to have a confessor sent to Damiens, notwithstanding the law that he should be given only one and that after judgment had been rendered. "One should be sent him," said Pasquier, "in order to soften his heart, and to influence him to make

the avowal of a conspiracy which we must have from him." The assembly consented to this, and the Prince de Conti, in accepting it, said that he agreed the more readily to this means, since all other means of discovering the motive of the attempt of murder being excluded, it was essential that this method be employed. A priest of Saint-Paul was sent. a man sold to the Jesuits and well known for his fanaticism against the parliament.

They also ordered to be fetched from Avignon a terrible machine under torture of which but one criminal had been known to maintain silence. It was about this circumstance that President de Meynières, who has preserved valuable notes concerning Damiens, says, "The more one meditates over the proceedings, the more one is convinced that no explanatory facts were brought to light. But one cannot help feeling convinced that, while the mystery remained, there were suspicions which may in time be cleared up."

The confrontation of Damiens and Belot was read in the parliament. Damiens firmly maintained before Belot that he had never mentioned the seven magistrates as accomplices but as magistrates with whom he was acquainted, and reproached Belot for having deceived him, while torturing him, in order to make him name the councilors with whom he was acquainted. This was sufficient to have issued a writ of arrest against Belot, but this is precisely what the parliament wanted to avoid by giving Jesuit confessors to Damiens and clearing the slanderers of the magistracy. The Prince de Conti, having proposed to deliberate about a crime of

this importance in view of the danger of letting Belot escape, the first president answered that the time had not yet come, and that it would be necessary to wait until the report was finished, promising that after the report they would deliberate about it. But when the report was finished the magistrate still insisted, that he could not deliberate about the affair until the reading of the conclusions and the examination. This desire to spare Belot gave rise to much talk; it was said openly in Paris that this happened because he had named the seven magistrates by superior order. It was affirmed even that Pasquier had spoken in the same way.

The reading of the report at Damien's trial lasted twenty-six hours, but presented no new facts to the judges so far as the motives of the offender were concerned. The same discrepancies were noticed concerning the stay of the criminal at Flanders; the same mystery was observed, the same lies about the action of Damiens in Paris on January 3rd, during the five hours that he had been there after having left his wife; the same in regard to his actions in Versailles on the 4th from three to eleven o'clock in the evening, when he went to take supper; and his actions on the 5th from the time that he went out until half past three, when a little man came to speak to him under the arch. There was always the same doubt as to the reasons of the attack and Damien's motive, who said sometimes that he had murdered the king on account of religious designs, and at other times that he had no religious sentiments whatever; he claimed sometimes that it was zeal for the

cause of the priests who were persecuted by the archbishops; sometimes that it was on account of the exiled magistrate; and finally, solely on account of the welfare of the people. Thus he appeared at times to have secrets, and at other times to conceal nothing. From this time on the tacit connivance of the court, of parliament, and of Damiens was noticed. They maintained profound silence as to the motive. The Prince de Conti, who alone showed strength of character during the judgment, observed that the judges did not wish the sergeant to be heard regarding the words which had escaped Damiens; and that they affected to draw no conclusions from the words of the regicide who had said: "I could make your fortune by telling you my secret."

The Prince de Conti, seeing that his advice to investigate the cause of the crime was not followed, though its worth was recognized, wished cleverly to introduce Pasquier's admission about the accident befalling the two horses which were in Versailles near Damiens when the affair happened. Pasquier, who saw the snare, believed he could evade it by saying that commissioners need not render account of the sources from which they obtain their information, and the first president added that it was sufficient to say that it came from the procureur-general.

The Prince de Conti replied to Pasquier, saying that the judges had as much right to be informed of everything as those whom they had sent as commissioners, and that it was unreasonable for employees to claim equal rights with their employers.

The first president, who believed his dignity compromised by this title of delegate or employer and who had done everything to find out the cause of the assassination, said that he was not a delegate of the assembly; that he could only be a delegate of the king. "This pretension is news for me," answered the Prince de Conti; "you will do me the pleasure of showing me your license." "Continue reading," added the first president, addressing himself to Pasquier. "What the Prince de Conti says cannot be maintained, and is best forgotten." "No, Sir," answered this prince, "I do not agree with you that truths should be forgotten. I criticise your words; they seem to me very careless."

Pasquier did not probe deeper to ascertain the cause of the assassination.

During the session of the princes and of the peers on the 26th of March, 1757, the four councilors' clerks went out; but the Count de Clermont remained, though he was Abbé of Saint-Germain des Prés. Damiens appeared surrounded by four men and attached by straps to rings which had been sunk into the flooring. In order to satisfy the public, he was questioned in regard to the causes of the assassination but he was too shrewd to be led astray. The sight of the princes of the blood and of the peers failed to move him; he fixed his eyes upon them all with great calmness and said, "Here is M. d'Uzès, whom I have had the honor to serve at his table; there is M. Turgot, I also have served him, likewise M. de Boufflers." He remarked to the Marshal de Noailles: "You cannot be very warm with your white stockings,

you should sit near the fire-place." He maintained this free and almost familiar manner when replying to his interrogators. M. de Biron said to him: "You should have told us who your accomplices were." "Perhaps you," answered Damiens. When the first president questioned him about his travels in Flanders he said bluntly: "Monseigneur, I have told you that twenty times; that is not the question in this trial."

When Pasquier pressed him to reveal the identity of his accomplices, Damiens answered: "No doubt M. Pasquier speaks well; he talks like an angel; the king ought to make him chancellor." He was also urged to tell where he had been at a certain moment, to which question Damiens answered haughtily, "At a place which must not be named in such good company whither I had been conducted by an engaging woman, who attracted me and whose hair was dressed *à la courtoisie*." He afterwards said in regard to a robbery that he had formerly committed: "I am not a good thief for I left six or seven hundred livres in gold in a pocket-book."

The examination lasted six hours and a quarter, during which the first president talked almost incessantly, hardly allowing time for Damiens to answer. The questions followed close upon each other. It was generally thought that it would have been much more profitable had Damiens occupied the time, but that is just what Maupeau did not wish. The fact that Damiens lied concerning his whereabouts and actions on the 3rd of January, before taking the coach for Versailles, proved conclusively that these five hours were very important.

They evidently did not wish to discover either what he had done on the 4th of January at Versailles or on the following day before the assault.

Concerning "the little man" who was said to have remarked to him, "Well!" and to whom he was said to have answered, "I wait," Damiens said this was the man with the machine. About the two horses, he said that had any been ready they would have been found.

Concerning his accomplices, he had said at Versailles: "I have some; I will not denounce them now. They are far away; I will name them to my judge. Allow me to speak with the dauphin; I would reveal to him a great many things. If I should declare my accomplices how many people would be embarrassed! If the king consents to grant me my life, I will explain myself more clearly."

At other times he persistently denied having had accomplices.

"Then you believe that your action was meritorious?"

"Of course, since I have done it," he said. "But your obstinacy proves that you are engaged by a terrible oath to reveal nothing." "I have nothing to reveal."

Another time Damiens admitted: "If my hat had known my thought, I would have thrown it in the fire. I left Flanders and Paris, and I remained two days at Versailles the sole possessor of my secret. I knew I should be condemned to death; for one can hardly save one's self after having committed so great a crime as this. It was, therefore, with no special object that I had that

gold on my person, and that I strove to conceal my movements."

At one time he would say that he held no religion; another time that he had committed this crime to avenge his religion; again, that it was on account of the refusal of the sacraments, or on account of the dismissal of the gentlemen of the parliament. He said that he had served councilors, and that what he had heard had fired his brain.

At another time he said: "A spell has been thrown over me. I left France to rid myself of this idea, but I was forced to come back. I asked the inn-keeper to bleed me on January 5th, and had he consented, this misfortune would not have befallen me."

When he was hard pressed concerning his actions, he answered: "I have nothing at all to say," or, "I have answered."

Once he said: "I regret not having put myself under the guidance of these Jansenist priests of Saint-Omer; I should not have committed my crime." Still Damiens did confess to Jesuits.

Damiens denied having dictated the seven names of the councilors that he knew best. He was told that if he had only named these councilors as persons with whom he was acquainted, he would not have dictated these words: "Let the king have his parliament come together; let him uphold it with the promise not to do anything to the above-mentioned company." Damiens answered that he had not read that addition before signing it.

Damiens was asked what he understood by these words of his letter: "The affair comes from their side only," he answered; "if I had written my letter myself, that would not be there. I intended to say that the parliament was right in what it did against the archbishop; but Belot put it down in writing as he wished to put it, and he took this expression from his own head."

The Prince de Conti remarked that he was forgetting something; the first president answered: "That is true; Damiens knows well that he forgets something, but he will not tell it." This shows the resolution of the first president to unveil nothing concerning the cause. The Duke of Orleans said that he remembered it well but that he would not tell it either. So that part of the sentence was not written.

In the evening when the question on Belot came up this omission was again taken up. Belot was still spared; that part of the sentence which concerned him in the protocol was passed in silence.

The Duke de la Force had the courage, before the judgment of Damiens, to issue a writ against Belot. The first president had promised that he would, and the Prince de Conti reminded the first president of the word that he had given; but the latter evaded the question; Pasquier even spoke for his discharge. He said that Belot had made a proposal which had two parts; first to name his accomplices and secured the councilors with whom he was acquainted; that Damiens had pretended to answer only the second, and Belot by a mistake could have understood that he answered the first or both to-

gether. Forty-seven voices were still favorable for Belot and concluded that nothing should be done against him. The parliament was then exhausted with fatigue, the session having lasted twelve hours.

The conduct of the first president and of Pasquier concerning Belot was such that the rule was adopted that when the commissioners had declared that a trial was going on, no opinion could be given on anything until after the final report was made.

This report finished, a new rule again saved Belot, namely that they could not deliberate on anything, until after the reading of the conclusions, and after the examinations before the judge, unless they deliberated separately.

During the examination Damiens was only questioned for the benefit of Belot; he was harassed in order to vindicate him and after this was done, another rule was brought to light; that nothing could be discussed except the judgment of the principal defendant at any one sitting.

On February 5, Damiens had declared in his examination that his soul was in safety. He added on March 18, that he believed that religion did not oppose his putting his hand upon the king when misfortunes justified it; that he had thought wrong in this but he had nevertheless thought it; and the doctrine of the Jesuits concerning this question was well known. He was asked from whence he had taken this doctrine; and he answered, "nowhere;" and when he was pressed hard he said, "I have nothing to answer."

They showed him his different accounts concerning the time when he said he formed this project, and his admission at Versailles that he had accomplices; he answered on the first point that he had nothing to reply and on the last point that he must have been out of his senses, if he had said all that.

After all these proceedings the torture was applied to Damiens. He admitted that as early as the month of August, 1756, he had said to Poperinghe that he would come back to France, that he would murder the head of the state and that he would perish himself. When the cords which were on his legs in the stocks were tightened, his only answer, when he was asked for the name of his accomplices, was: "Rascal of an archbishop, your refusals are the cause of everything."

While the death preparations were being made, the police informed the ministry that they would look out for the security of the condemned man because they feared that something might happen. This showed how they still feared that he might by rescued by accomplices before he could be put to death. The police even took possession of the keys of all the back doors of the houses on the streets which led towards the Grève. The preparations for his death were terrible. In the midst of the square of Grève a scaffold was erected three feet high, surrounded with three circuits of iron which, by means of hinges, were closed with screws; they were intended to hold back the body of the unfortunate man who was to be fastened upon the table by the loins, the chest and the neck. Damiens looked at the instrument

with which he was to be killed and at the spectators very quietly. The knife was fastened to his hand which was burned, while he uttered fearful shrieks and raised his head in order to see the operation.

With sharp pincers pieces of flesh were torn away from his arm, his calves, his upper leg and his chest; every tearing made him utter fearful groans, but without swearing or imprecations. Melted lead was poured into his wounds, which made the unfortunate man shriek. These operations lasted three-quarters of an hour.

Then his arms and feet were fastened to the traces of four horses and the pulling began. With every effort Damiens uttered wild cries; but all the pullings failed to rend him. Then they attached the horses to his legs, but this also failed of the desired effect. His nerves and sinews, which had lengthened without breaking, and had resisted the pulling of the horses, had to be cut. The executioner cut, or, rather, chopped off his limbs, while Damiens was still lifting his head in order to witness it. He died in losing the last arm after one hour and a quarter of pulling by the horses. The king was informed that certain gentlemen of his court had hired rooms at the Grève in order to witness the execution. The king stopped the courtier who was going to relate it, and said with great sorrow that he did not want to know their names. The most delicate of the ladies of the court hired windows, and paid as high as twenty-five louis.

The father, the wife and the daughter of Damiens were banished forever from the kingdom, and prohibited

from coming back under penalty of being hanged. His brothers, his sisters, his sisters-in-law, all his relatives were obliged to change their names under the same penalty. Every family in the whole kingdom which happened to be called Damiens changed its name.

A few days afterwards there appeared the *Lettre d'un patriote*, which wounded cruelly some of the commissioners on account of the allegations contained in it. These were burned, and a resolution was adopted to ask from the king a declaration of the penalty of death against the authors and distributors of certain pamphlets which were being spread in opposition to public peace. The king and his council and chancellor thought the death law too severe; they satisfied themselves with throwing into prison anybody who talked about the affair of Damiens. However, the Jesuits, Dr. Marcilly and the priest of Saint-Paul announced what Damiens had declared with a loud voice when he was executed, that by this assassination he had proposed to vindicate the honor and glory of parliament, and that he hoped by these attempts to render a great service to the state. They said that "he was without accomplices"; but they added that Damiens had exclaimed: "I should not be here if I had not served councilors of the parliament."

CHAPTER LXXIV.

Details of the negotiations of Maria-Theresa in France to unite her house to that of the Bourbons to the prejudice of the smaller powers.—Mme. de Pompadour sells the kingdom of France to her.—She loses the ministers who were partisans of the old principles against Austria.—Anecdotes of Mme. de Pompadour.—Secret negotiations with the empress.

In order to unite France and Austria, France needed a weak king and a sovereign as able as Maria-Theresa in Austria; there was also needed a scheming favorite at Versailles, and at Vienna as deep a minister as Kaunitz.

Louis XV. proposed to give Mme. de Pompadour an education, but he received one from his mistress. He had been born avaricious, but she made him prodigal. Like Louis XIII. and Louis XIV., Louis XV. detested Austria, but his mistress reconciled him with that power. Most of the courtiers were introduced to her in his secret committees; and this monarch who loved Maurepas and many worthy persons of his court was induced to deprive them of his good graces. In the strength of his youth the king had not been very debauched; in a more advanced age she prepared for him the pleasures of youth, and instilled in him an inclination for change and variety. When she saw that her charms no longer had the same power over the king, she created a department for his pleasures, and placed herself at the head of his secret

affairs in order to govern them, and those of France and the whole of Europe also.

This woman in Paris, could facilitate the union of two powers that were such great rivals as France and Austria, and which were so far from possessing the same views and interests, that when M. de Kaunitz, Austrian minister at Aix-la-Chapelle, made the first advances to Saint-Severin whom Mme. de Pompadour had sent to that city in order to conclude peace at any price, Saint-Severin refused to pay any attention to the project.

Mme. de Pompadour, sought after with much eagerness by the Queen of Hungary, and already resolved to sell her the king and the kingdom, saw in Maria-Theresa, who called her "her princess" and "her cousin" such a protection, and such a powerful resource, that she endeavored to keep herself in her favor. She had recourse to two means for success in this; the first was to send away the old ministerial heads who still held the principles of Louis XIV.; then to put at the head of foreign affairs ministers who were of no account, or who were devoted to her.

The Count de Maurepas, the deacon of the ministers in the year, 1748, who had been an eye-witness during the Regency of the revolution which Spain attempted to bring about in France when the regent allied with Austria, was the one most to be feared. He saw the king when he wished, he had his confidence, he knew the art of pleasing the monarch, and drew upon himself on that account the jealousy of the favorite. She had him exiled in the month of April, 1749, and she placed

at the head of the navy, which had been directed by M. de Maurepas ever since the Regency, Roullier, a man without will, without character, and without talent, whom she made an instrument of her own will, rather than a minister of the great kingdom. After two years of administration in the navy department she raised herself to that of foreign affairs for the fulfillment of her designs.

In leaving M. de Maurepas in the ministry there was another inconvenience: he held the friendship of the dauphin, a declared enemy of Austria, and she feared that this minister, who was very capable in secret intrigues, would frustrate the views that she had had for a long time about France and Austria. His famous verses also strengthened her determination to dethrone him. We give these verses here because they give a natural picture of the king, of Mme. de Pompadour, and the courtiers, and because they should pass as a historical document rather than a satire of the times. The song is meant for the melody of the *Trembleurs* of the opera *Isis*, and the favorite attributed it to Maurepas.

Les grands seigneurs s'avillissent,
Les financiers s'enrichissent,
Les Poissons s'agrandissent :
C'est le règne des vauriens.
On épuise la finance
En bâtiments en dépense ;
L'État tombe en décadence,
Le roi ne met ordre a rien, rien, rien, rien.

Une petite bourgeoise,
Élevée a la grivoise,

Mesurant tout a sa toise,
Fait de la cour un taudis.
Le roi, malgré son scrupule,
Pour elle fortement brûle.
Cette flamme ridicule
Excite dans tout Paris, ris, ris, ris.

Cette catin subalterne
Insolemment le gouverne,
Et c'est elle qui décerne
Les honneurs à prix d'argent.
Devant l'idole tout plie,
Le courtesan s'humilie ;
Il subit cette infamie,
Et n'est que plus indigent, gent, gent, gent.

La contenance éventée
La peau jaune et maltraitée,
Et chaque dent tachetée,
Les yeux froids et le cou long,
Sans esprit, sans caractère,
L'âme vile et mercenaire,
Le propos d'une commère,
Tout est bas chez la Poisson, son, son, son.

Si dans les beautés choisies
Elle était des plus jolies,
On passerait les folies
Quand l'objet est un bijou ;
Mais pour si sotte creature,
Pour si plate figure
Exciter tant de murmures,
Chacun juge le roi fou, fou, fou, fou.

Ce n'est pas que pour lui plaire
Le beau soit bien nécessaire :
Vintimille sut lui faire
Trouver son minois joli.
On dit même que d'Estrade,
Si vilaine et si maussade,

Aura bientôt la passade ;
Elle en l'air tout bouffi, fi, fi, fi.

Mme. de Pompadour, having succeeded in exiling Maurepas, detained him at Bourges until 1752, when he was allowed to come to Plessis near Dammartin, ten miles from Paris, to a castle belonging to his mother-in-law. Mme. de Maurepas also came to Paris to the child-bed of Mme. d'Agenois, and her husband arrived in the night at Clichy at the house of Mme. de Pontchartrain, passed through Paris during the night without stopping on the 29th of June and arrived on the 30th at Plessis.

After M. de Maurepas, the most renowned heads which Mme. de Pompadour struck were Machault and d'Argenson. In order to get rid of them she used as a pretext certain affairs in which Machault and d'Argenson had taken the most important part. She substituted for these men who had made a deep study of the problem of administration, Roullier, Saint-Contest, Paulmy, Moras, Crémille, Massiac, Berrier and other persons who were in obscurity before they became ministers, and who have been known since by their incapacity and their malversation in public office. Among the multitude of statesmen whom she intrusted with the handling of the administration, the Abbé de Bernis, who had talent, genius, honesty, and character, was alone distinguished. We shall speak of him later.

Concerning Machault and d'Argenson, who were sent away on the same day, her jealousy against the first who had the confidence of the king, and the hatred which she

had conceived against the second, who was openly at variance with her, had prepared their disgrace. Outrageous caricatures determined her, besides, to ask the exile of d'Argenson, which she obtained the same day. Thus although she nearly always was carried along by a motive of hatred, still a specific act was necessary to determine her; for she resolved to send away d'Argenson only when one of her friends, who went to see this minister and happened to see a letter that he was writing, perceived that it was about an engraving which was then being given publicity. It represented d'Argenson in a coach, Machault in the coachman's place and the king dressed as a lackey behind. The letter which contained the caricature began with these words: "My lackey has just sent away my coachman." The king who had just sent away Machault with flattering testimonials, felt himself outraged and sent d'Argenson away with indignation.

In the same way that Mme. de Maintenon and all the shrewd ministers knew how to employ at the right times punishment and rewards, the favorite aimed to dispose even of the offices of the Bastille and to have them occupied by her own creatures. The old De Launay, who died at the age of seventy-six in the year 1749, had governed this prison well and to the profit of the ministers; but she wished to make use of this prison in order to maintain her influence. To inspire terror and by that to preserve her situation entered into her plan, especially since her beauty had begun to disappear. She therefore placed a man by the name of Baile, a creature of hers, in

charge of the Bastille, and took him into her house in order to immediately transmit her commands to him. This Baile had received his education as jailor, in the castle of Vincennes, and since he imprisoned poets, people who had made witticisms, and all those who were wanting in respect for the Marquise de Pompadour, mistress of the king, the governor of the Bastille was for her, the first and most important of her business men.

Mme. de Pompadour took advantage of her great influence to place her parents in embassies; Baschi was made ambassador of France and Portugal. She had regularly more courtiers than the king, the queen, and the dauphin, and she received them all seated, they meanwhile standing. The princes of the blood were obliged to submit to this humiliating etiquette, and always to appear content in order to preserve favor. She spoke then with the tone of a sovereign woman; and, without having either good manners, or that tone which education gives, she had all of a sovereign's firmness, or, rather, its stubbornness, having "never having been able," as the court said, "to get rid of her tone of *petite bourgeoise*." It was in the presence of a great company at her toilet that Dagé, the most celebrated hair-dresser of the century, gave her a laconic answer, worthy of a man of his occupation who did not himself know the whole value of it. All the women wished to have their hair dressed by this Dagé, who made twenty thousand livres of income. The princesses of the blood, the ladies of the court, all the rich people of good taste at Versailles, begged Dagé to dress their hair; and when Mme. de Pompadour one day

asked Dagé in the presence of the highest society where his great renown at the court came from, Dagé answered:—

"It is, madame, because I dressed the hair of the *other*." Dagé was speaking of Mme. de Chateauroux.

Mme. de Pompadour had a little daughter by the name of Alexandrine, who had been brought up in the convent of the Assomption, and who was secretly asked in marriage by the greatest gentlemen of the court. Coigny was one of those; but madame desired very much to marry her to the son of the Marshal de Richelieu, who answered her very quickly that he would write about it to the empress-queen, to whom his son had the honor to belong. The Marshal de Richelieu had indeed married an heiress of the name of Guise, who was of German origin. So this project of marriage was thwarted and the favorite never forgave the Marshal de Richelieu for preventing its consummation.

The influence of Mme. de Pompadour had risen under these circumstances to the highest point; if she could not please the king by the beauty of her face, she occupied his leisure with so much success that she became necessary to him. She took the foreign affairs into her own hands, and also those of the wars and those of the other ministers. All became her clerks, and she possessed the power to send them away or to bring them to disaster when they attempted to manage independently of her. In order to please the king, she disguised herself in the small houses of pleasure around Versailles, sometimes as a countrywoman, sometimes as a shepherdess, and served breakfast to the king in those costumes. She

Madame de Pompadour

From a very rare print

devoted herself also to more unworthy offices. She brought up in secret little girls destined for the pleasures of the king, prepared them for his couch, placed them there, and looked for the kind of beauty that it was necessary to procure for the king, instructing these unfortunate children in the tastes of this lewd old man, and what was necessary to be done in order to succeed in amusing him.

Mme. de Pompadour satisfied with pleasing the king appeared indifferent to the sentiments of the nation in regard to her. Satisfied in inspiring fear the sentiment of being loved or considered, touched her very little. Being detested by the royal family she appeared to desire from them only exterior considerations; but she felt affronts so deeply that she complained to the king as if the offence were personal to the monarch and always obtained redress from him. "Beaufremont has taken a seat in my presence," she said one day to the king, with much emotion. Louis did not take any notice of it. To appease her it was said that the case of M. de Beaufremont was of no consequence, and that in the old pious court of the deceased king, they had always joked about the factious ways of the marquis who had a caustic and naturally eccentric character, to which nobody paid any attention. His old anecdotes and witticisms were repeated to her. His beautiful title of Comte de Donavert which was given to him after the battle of that name was recalled to her and this seemed to appease her anger. The devout ladies of the old court of France, the Duchess of Orleans herself had preserved this name for Beau-

fremont, and during the winter of 1705 all the women, greatly taken with it, had vied with one another in according him their favors. The Count de Tressen has thus given the anecdote of Beaufremont who showed all kinds of masculine courage a moment before the battle of Donavert, and who wished the soldiers whom he commanded to be witnesses of it.

> A Donavert on a vu Beaufremont,
> Tel que Priape avec sa tête altière,
> En s'écriant: C'est ainsi qu'un dragon
> Des ennemis doit franchir la barrière.

By these incidents it is easily seen how powerful Mme. de Pompadour was at the court of France, how much consideration they had there for her and how skillful Maria-Theresa was in using her for her own interests. Only a woman of this character was capable of preparing such a revolution as an alliance of the Austrians with the French, even the mere proposal of which was revolting.

The peace of 1748 was neither negotiated nor concluded when Maria-Theresa looked to Mme. de Pompadour to forestall the other powers. Resolved to make an armistice, only, of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in order to deceive Frederick, and then to surprise him at a favorable moment and to conquer back Silesia, she formed three plans: first, to finish the war of 1740 by a treaty; second, to stir up enemies against Frederick, and third, to make an alliance with France. Towards the end of the year 1750 the Count de Kaunitz, her plenipotentiary minister, arrived at Paris and made proposals for an alliance.

The reasons of the Count de Kaunitz were specious; we had at that time no navy. England could raise a formidable one in a few weeks. The Queen of Hungary insinuated that the King of England would respect the alliance proposed by her, in consideration of his electorate of Hanover, and demanded that France should unite with Austria against Prussia, a small but enterprising power, which was always ready to disturb the peace of Europe in order to increase its possessions after the quarrel, as was the King of Sardinia and other smaller powers.

He quoted, for example, the last treaties and the most recent wars where these princes had been the greatest curse to Europe, and had disturbed the cabinets by their political schemes; and he promised France, whose finances were in the greatest disorder, a lasting peace when they would be free to indulge in pleasures and gaming. All this especially opened the eyes of Mme. de Pompadour, who saw how painful secret negotiations to obtain subsidies would be to the king, who was then involved in serious troubles with parliament, as we have mentioned above.

The arguments of M. de Puysieux, minister of foreign affairs, in favor of avoiding such projects, should have dismissed forever the idea of such an alliance. To a friend of Tiquet, first clerk of foreign affairs, a man of merit, who had the full confidence of the ministry, and who was esteemed by the king, Puysieux observed that France was a protector of public liberty both in Germany and in Italy, and that if we entered into an alli-

ance with Maria-Theresa, we should lose our prestige in these two countries in favor of this princess, who, having nothing more to fear from our rivalry, would exercise such power there as she should deem wise.

CHAPTER LXXV.

First treaty, the 9th of March, 1756, between France and Austria.—The Abbess of Bernis principle negotiator of this treaty.—Portrait of the Abbé de Bernis.—His connections with Mme. de Pompadour.—Secret intentions of the Queen of Hungary when allying herself with France.—Her pretexts.—Signatures.

WHEN Maria-Theresa found obstacles in the way of allying herself with us, she only increased her caresses and flatteries with Mme. de Pompadour, in order to eventually succeed in her project. If the ministers showed an invincible resistance she managed secretly to oppose to them ambitious candidates. The Abbé de Bernis cleverly conducted the affair.

Coming from Paris while yet a mere lad, he won the affection and esteem of those with whom he came in contact by the frankness and openness of his character and the attractiveness of his personal appearance.

Born of a poor and obscure family at Saint-Marcel d'Ardèche en Vivarais, near Le Pont-Saint-Esprit, he possessed that brilliant and poetic imagination which the beautiful sky of Low-Vivarais, Languedoc and Provence inspires.

These qualities, so rare in the Sulpician character, displeased the directors of the assembly of his diocese, and he was obliged to leave his country while still very young. He came to Paris; even there he was still followed by the gloomy hatred of the Sulpicians which

pursued him to Rome, where he was invested with his dignities. The Jesuits allied themselves with these priests, and Boyer, who was attached to the favorite, kept him, so far as he could, from receiving ecclesiastic favors; but the abbé ended by attaching himself to the favorite of the king and thereby outwitted them.

The Abbé de Bernis had connected himself with Mme. d'Estra and with Mme. d'Etioles before her promotion and took advantage of their friendship at court. The Baron de Montmorency, having lodged him at his house when he was poor, allied himself to the favorite at this time; and just as soon as Mme. de Pompadour enjoyed the favor of the king, the Abbé de Bernis influenced her to distinguish the House of Montmorency. The baron was made the "menin" (a kind of companion) of the dauphin.

The marquise eagerly desired that the Abbé de Bernis should obtain documental privileges, but the young abbé was a poet, and clever withal, and as Boyer combined materialism and vulgarity with poetry this was not practical. Boyer harshly denounced his pleasure-parties which were a little too free, and declared to the king that he could not burden his conscience by granting privileges to the Abbé de Bernis. The king, however, granted a pension from his private purse, for their continuance.

The Abbé de Bernis was already famous for impromptu poetry. One day when he was at the Countess de Forcalquier's and saw her pouring coffee into a set of Saxony china, he recited the following lines:—

La maîtresse du cabaret
Mérite bien qu'on la dépeigne :
Qui voit Hébé voit son portrait ;
L'enfant ailé lui sert d'enseigne.
Bacchus, assis sur son tonneau,
La prend pour la fille de l'onde.
Elle ne verse que de l'eau
Et sait enivrer tout le monde.

Upon another occasion while dining with the king and Mme. de Pompadour he composed the following song:—

Le plasir couronne de fleurs
Vient voler sur la table.
Il n'attend, pour charmer nos coeurs,
Qu'un moment favorable.
Belle Céphise où tu n'es pas
Pourrait-il nous séduire ?
Il a besoin de tes appas
Pour fonder son empire.

Viens réveiller sous ce berceau
L'esprit et la saillie ;
Ils t'attendent sous un tonneau
Qu'a percé la folie.
Le Champagne est prêt de pavtir ;
Dans sa prison il fume,
Impatient de te couvrir
De sa bouillante écume.

Sais-tu pourquoi ce vin brillant,
Dès que ta main l'agite,
Comme un éclair étincelant
Vole et se precipite ?
En vain Bacchus dans le flacon
Retient l'Amour rebelle ;
L'Amour sort toujours de prison
Sous la main d'une belle.

Such was the character of the Abbé de Bernis whom

Mme. de Pompadour employed to upset the policy of the House of Bourbon with Austria. But De Richelieu was the instigator of this policy. His profound scheming was brought to naught, and the interminable system of dismemberment was ended, thereby frightening Maria-Theresa, and causing her to seek help from various sources.

Richelieu, who disapproved an alliance with Austria, was not initiated. Every man, who might have opposed the views of Maria-Theresa, was kept in the dark. The favorite, the Abbé de Bernis and Staremberg, minister of the Queen of Hungary, agreed to meet secretly in country houses or in isolated places. During the latter part of October, 1755, a larger committee was proposed in order to secure the sympathy of the king; the proposals of Maria-Theresa were then read. "She proposed to make a cession of the Netherlands, giving them to a neutral prince of the House of Bourbon, the Duke de Parma. Bourbon was to drive the Englishmen from Holland. Poland was to be declared free and its crown hereditary. Sweden would absorb Pomerania, and Denmark would be admitted to the union. Russia would be included in the contract, and as France was *de facto* at war with England, though war had not been declared, this league of the great powers of the continent would naturally weaken England's naval power."

The Queen of Hungary was naturally decided and firm of character while Louis XV. possessed neither of those qualities. This stupendous plan was not understood in its entirety, neither was it accepted. Maria-

Theresa sought a way whereby she might ally herself with us under any plan whatsoever, provided she could, by allying herself with an equal, repress the ambition of the small states. This was her purpose, and the foundation of the plan which she followed so cleverly. The Abbé de Bernis proposed "a reciprocal guaranty" of the states of the two houses, whereby Prussia was included and England excluded. The old plan was complicated; the simplicity of this one was approved.

Peace was ostensibly the object of this union, but Maria-Theresa had other designs than those of peace. France and Prussia had taken from her Silesia; she wanted to make use of us in order to regain this large province. The fatal treaty was signed, and then began the misfortunes which occurred during the latter part of the king's reign. The flattery of Maria-Theresa, the vanity and the influence of Mme. de Pompadour, the interests of the Abbé de Bernis, the ill-humor of the king towards the King of Prussia, and finally the incapacity of the ministry to foresee the consequences, determined the drawing up of this treaty. Rouillé and the Abbé de Bernis signed it on the 9th of May, 1756. France and Austria promised reciprocally 24,000 men in case one of the two powers should be attacked. We shall soon see what happened to us on this account.

In the meantime they humiliated England which, without warning, had swooped piratically down upon us.

CHAPTER LXXVI.

The Marshal de Richelieu is appointed to command at Mahon.—Siege and conquest of the fort.

It was still uncertain whither the French forces would be directed, but the marshal decided that it would be best to begin by besieging Mahon. He made a memorandum in which he set forth the advantages of conquering this stronghold and the importance of the place, in case expeditions should be made to America. He showed, moreover, that the island of Minorca cut off all communication between England and the King of Sardinia and enabled us to intercept their commerce with the Orient and Italy; and he showed, also, that those seas could not be navigated without a great squadron. He opposed, moreover, the plans of those politicians who attempted to dispose of the island by giving it back to the Spaniards. He agreed with them that the union of the two crowns was greatly to be desired, but it was necessary to carefully consider the matter before making such a sacrifice.

Mme. de Lauraguais, who constantly sought an opportunity to aid her lover, invited all the ministers to attend a private supper at her home at which the Abbé de Bernis, who had joined the council, was present.

The marshal maintained that the only means of punish-

ing the Englishmen for the stand they had taken was to capture Mahon. The undertaking seemed very difficult to the abbé. Richelieu asked for 30,000 men, and guaranteed success. Mme. de Lauraguais begged the abbé to propose the affair to the council; the following day he fulfilled the commission. The king had already mentioned the project to the Prince de Conti who had asked for 50,000 men, without answering for its success. He inquired who the general was who was so certain of victory. Richelieu was named. "He is very presumptuous to have boasted thus," continued the king, "and fortunate indeed if his hopes are realized. Well! he shall command." Mme. de Lauraguais hastened to the marshal to announce the news.

Mme. de Pompadour was incensed at this news and told everywhere that Richelieu was a braggart; however, she consoled herself with the hope that he would not succeed; she even pretended to be pleased with his nomination, and congratulated him with every appearance of friendship for the compliment he had received from the monarch. These two persons feared each other and consequently spared each other; they were like two lovers who are constantly quarreling and becoming reconciled. When they were supposed to be angry with one another, people were astonished to see them apparently on very familiar terms.

Richelieu was invariably invited to be present at the feasts given by the king. Mme. de Pompadour had tried many times to embarrass him but was as often unsuccessful. Their conduct was an interesting study

and the marshal had to summon all his cunning to withstand her thrusts.

He expected to find that all necessary preparations had been made at Toulon, but the marquise and her agents had taken great care to give contrary orders. They wanted to avenge themselves at any cost, and the honor of the state, the blood of the people, and financial losses were not to enter into consideration. They were determined that the marshal should be covered with shame, and that his expedition should appear ridiculous.

MM. de Belle-Isle and d'Argenson sympathized with the marquise in every respect; they were glad before when they witnessed Richelieu's ignominous retreat. He arrived at Toulon the 1st of April, 1756, and saw at once that he had been deceived in his expectations. His vigilance and activity repaired the evil however. He was supported by the people of Marseilles who helped him to procure what he needed. His troops having embarked on transport vessels, he himself went on board, and the signal of departure was given the following day.

On the 12th a tempest scattered the squadron, but on the 18th he landed on the island of Minorca, where he met with no resistance from the enemy who had abandoned the town of Citadella. Here the marshal remained over night. When the French approached, the English left the city of Mahon and withdrew to the Fort Saint-Philippe, which was considered impregnable. On the 22nd the marshal received a drummer who came from General Blakeney, governor of the fort, to inquire

why the Frenchmen had disembarked on the island of Minorca; Richelieu answered that it was for the same reason that the English squadrons had attacked the ships of the king.

The marshal went in person to reconnoitre the camp which he wished his army to occupy, and which they entered that very afternoon. In the meantime, M. de la Gallissonnière remained with his squadron in sight of the port. He then set sail, and directed his course to the port of Mahon.

We will not enter into the details of this remarkable siege. Suffice it to say, the marshal exposed himself there as a common soldier, showing rare presence of mind and remarkable courage, and that he was supported by M. de la Gallissonnière, who prevented the English from receiving any help by sea. The engagement which took place quite near to the island of l'Aire on the 19th of May, between the squadron of M. de la Gallissonnière and that of Admirals Byng and Bouel, and in which M. de la Gallissonnière was victorious, shattered the hopes which the besieged had hitherto entertained of receiving aid, and they at once surrendered the fort.

Up to this time, notwithstanding their numerous successes, a speedy victory was not expected. The fire of the enemy was still heavy, and they were rejoicing at Versailles, where it was reported that the marshal began to despair of the success of the expedition. He went every day to observe the enemy and the effect of the batteries from a miller's house situated upon a hill. The enemy, wishing to interfere with these observations, often

fired upon the house; in fact, it was several times pierced with cannon shots while the marshal was there.

However, he did not despair of the success of his enterprise; he was confident of the good will of his troops, and took advantage of every favorable opportunity. He saw that final success required the overcoming of a thousand difficulties. The soldiers willingly repaired the damages which the bombs and batteries of the enemy wrought. The marshal, convinced that advantage should be taken of the first fire of the French, waited impatiently to return the assault. He went every day to visit the most advanced posts. A sentinel of one of the forts was wont to amuse himself by firing at him, and one day Richelieu, hearing a ball whistle near his ears, approached a gunner and asked him if he could not rid him of that scoundrel who might be more skillful another time. This gunner, whose name was Thomas, a deserter from the regiment of Nizza, had served for three days in his battery without asking to be relieved. His regiment had arrived first at Mahon, and knowing that he would be shot if recognized, he attempted to take his own life, but was unsuccessful, and was, moreover, the only one who had escaped the murderous fire of the enemy. He was very skillful and active, and never was a battery better served than his, though it was the most exposed. Blackened with powder, covered with sweat and dust, and deprived of nourishment for two days, he dragged himself towards the general, and promised that if he missed the soldier with his first cannon shot he would certainly not escape the second.

Straightway he chose a moment when this soldier was the least protected; the shot was fired, and his hat was seen flying through the air. The marshal, who was charmed with his skill, asked why he had seen him three days in succession, but the unfortunate Thomas, exhausted and overcome by hunger, had already fallen in a swoon near the cannon which he had served so well.

The marshal was then convinced that he did not wish to be relieved; he had him carried to the hospital and charged an officer to inquire as to the motives which had prompted this gunner to conduct himself thus; but Thomas said he would speak only to his general. Upon his recovery he obtained permission to present himself to Richelieu, when he fell at his feet and acknowledged his fault, admitting that he deserved punishment but pleading in extenuation thereof his desire to remain at the battery where all his comrades had been killed. He begged to be spared the death penalty and to be given the most dangerous post, which he promised to guard faithfully, content to die if he could save the life of *one* of his fellow soldiers.

The marshal, touched by the repentance of so brave a man, assured him that he could quietly resume his duties. He then required a detailed account of his conduct. All the testimonials were in favor of the gunner. Soon after Richelieu visited the same battery which the soldier continued to serve with incredible skill and intrepidity. Advancing towards him he presented him with a commission of second lieutenant, saying, "Take this, my friend; it is a reward for your services." This man who was a

brave officer as he had been a faithful soldier was afterwards made captain. His body was covered with scars when in the year 1777 he came to Versailles for a pension. He had served thirty-eight years. Surprise was expressed that he did not ask for the cross of Saint-Louis but he was equally astonished that they considered him deserving of it. The Marshal de Richelieu who knew better than any one else the value of his services obtained this military reward for him and received the brave Thomas as chevalier.

Another anecdote of this siege, quoted many times, but one which cannot be repeated too often, shows clearly how perfect a knowledge the marshal had of the human heart. He knew that Frenchmen were prompted to action by a sense of honor and this incitement had more power over them than any punishment. Most of the soldiers, drinking freely of the good Mahon wine, became intoxicated every day. The prison was found too small to accommodate them and fearing insubordination, a council of war was proposed to the general at which it was suggested that some of the most guilty ones be hanged, as an example to the others. Richelieu answered that he would reserve this as a last resort and when the army assembled, he passed through the ranks shouting: "Soldiers, grenadiers, I declare that those among you who continue to drink so much shall not have the honor of taking part in the assault which I am about to make."

This speech produced the desired effect. The soldiers

no longer drank to excess; each was overwhelmed by fear of the punishment which threatened him.

The place was stormed and although the ladders were found to be too short by several feet, the soldiers raised themselves upon the shoulders of their comrades and scaled the wall. Notwithstanding the terrible fire of the enemy they climbed over the rocks and the French came out victorious. Old General Blakeney and the garrison, very much disheartened at this incredible audacity, proposed a capitulation.

The marshal granted the enemy most generous conditions, and when he discovered the number of their troops and their immense store of provisions, could not understand why they surrendered so quickly; while the French, considering what they had accomplished, felt gratified at their success.

Richelieu despatched his son and his brother-in-law, the Count d'Egmont, to inform the king and the court. The court was then at Compiègne and the marshal's enemies were much surprised at the news which covered him with glory. The Duke de Fronsac received as a reward the cross of Saint-Louis and the king gave him the reversion of the charge of first gentleman of the chamber.

Mme. de Lauraguais, who was overcome with pleasure at the praises showered upon her lover, could hardly contain herself for joy. Mme. de Pompadour, even, surprised at the turn of affairs, composed songs in his honor and called him her dear "Minorcan."

The ministers who disliked Richelieu were for a long

time opposed to his coming to Paris to enjoy his glory. They gave as a pretext that he was needed in Provence in order to protect his posts from the incursions of the enemy. However he finally came.

D'Argenson, minister of war, devoured by jealousy, and the courtiers, who feared this first interview with the king, retarded his return and invented a thousand false stories to impair the king's gratitude towards him. The marshal, who had been informed of this, complained that his health was not good and the permission was sent him to come back. He arrived August 31st, 1756, and was followed to his hotel by a great crowd of people who proclaimed him to be *le défenseur de Mahon.* Feasts were given in his honor both in city and country, but at the court he was coldly received. Mme. de Pompadour mocked him, and Louis, a selfish man and a most ungrateful prince, received him coolly and addressed him thus: "Ah, you are here, M. le Maréchal. How did you find the figs of Minorca? They are said to be very good." Richelieu lowered his eyes and ignored the king's remark, while the whole court believed him to have fallen into disgrace.

CHAPTER LXXVII.

The Marshal de Richelieu takes the place of the Marshal d'Estrées.—He makes rapid progress in the Electorate of Hanover.—Being troubled by the cabinet of Versailles, he is obliged to enter into new negotiations.—He loses his advantage but forces Prince Ferdinand to withdraw.

THE Marshal de Richelieu, covered with laurels from his success at Mahon and famed throughout France, expected to be employed in the next campaign. He had fulfilled that year the functions of his charge near the king, but he was soon to be disappointed. The first days of his service were remarkable on account of the crime of Damiens. The 5th of January, 1757, the king was stabbed by this criminal who, wrought up over religious matters and the affairs of the time, pretended to have no other object in attacking Louis than to force him to repentance.

This assault created the greatest excitement throughout the whole kingdom. Suspicion attached to the most illustrious men.

Mme. de Pompadour was sent away; but Richelieu, reassured of his master's safety, as he was but slightly wounded, was clever enough to foresee that she would soon come back and exert a greater influence than ever. He left the bedside of the king to console the favorite and his conduct certainly contributed to bring about a reconciliation.

The return of Mme. de Pompadour was followed by the exile of the keeper of seals M. de Machault and M. d'Argenson. The marquise, believing she had cause for complaint against them, sent one to his castle d'Arnouville and the other to Ormes.

It was at this same time that the marshal, who desired to be nearer his daughter, Mme. d'Egmont, bought the mansion d'Antin. There he built that pavilion which was afterwards called "The Pavilion of Hanover."

At length the campaign began, still Richelieu remained inactive. The Marshal d'Estrées, who went to Vienna to persuade the king to sign a paper in which he agreed to have his army cross the Weser and enter the Electorate of Hanover, had been appointed general of the army. The Prince de Soubise, an intimate friend of the favorite, headed the French troops, who were to join the Prince of Saxe-Hildburghausen near the Main.

The Marshal d'Estrées, who was opposed against the Duke of Cumberland, was content to annoy him by marches and counter-marches. He forced him to give up his camp at Bielefeld in order to recross the Weser and cover the Electorate of Hanover.

This slow march did not satisfy the impatient Frenchmen. They murmured. They thought it strange that a general in command of a hundred thousand men made so little progress. At the court they intrigued; the Duchess de Lauraguais availed herself of every opportunity to serve M. Richelieu. The king favored her on account of her sister Mme. de Chateauroux, and soon he saw her efforts crowned with success. Mme. de

Pompadour complained of the Marshal d'Estrées, who being a severe disciplinarian had had one of her protégés, hanged. In this way she hastened Richelieu's appointment. They resolved that the secret should be well kept. However, it leaked out and M. de Puisieux, father-in-law of M. d'Estrées, wrote him as follows. "You are going to lose your office; your conduct is criticised; it is said that you are timid. Your successor is already chosen. Fight a battle; it is absolutely necessary. If you win it you will be appreciated; if you are defeated you will lose nothing."

This letter decided the battle of Hastembeck at which d'Estrées was victorious. It was in this battle that Count de Maillebois, an excellent general, was criticised by all good citizens for not having advanced at the right time. He was jealous of the marshal and wanted him to lose the battle. This affair, long afterwards was brought before the tribunal of the marshals of France, who declared him unworthy of obtaining his degree of honor. This, however, was his only punishment. The unfortunate Byng had been shot in England for a lesser crime.

What M. de Puisieux had foreseen, happened; the people who had blamed Marshal d'Estrées, and who had considered him a faint-hearted man, had scarcely received the news of his victory and his recall, when their anger towards the ministry subsided. They deeply regretted the withdrawal of d'Estrées which they had eagerly sought a few days before and regarded the same as foreboding dire misfortune.

The nomination of the Marshal de Richelieu was ignored, even by the majority of those who composed the council. Their carriages were already on the road to Strasburg when the surgeon of the Marshal de Belle-Isle informed them at Compiègne, of Richelieu's departure. They thought him stupid and ignorant and ignored his assertion. However, his statement was confirmed that evening.

Richelieu went to Strasburg. For a long time he had desired to measure himself against the King of Prussia, and he hoped to take the place of the Prince de Soubise who, it was said, would succeed M. d'Estrées. Voltaire, with whom he corresponded, having complimented him on his nomination, advised him to challenge the King of Prussia, who, he said treated the French generals like marquises of the stage.

It was at Strasburg that the marshal learned that he was to be commander of the army of M. d'Estrées. When he arrived he was accorded every conceivable honor.

We already know what rapid progress Richelieu made. He marched against the Duke of Cumberland, forced him to withdraw, and prevented his remaining at Stade. He concluded the war in that part in one month. The army of the enemy became prisoners of war. The Count de Linar proposed, under the guaranty of the King of Denmark, the too renowned convention of Closter-Seven, which would have been more useful than a victory had the protocol been drawn up more clearly. It was signed by the marshal. All the troops of Hesse,

Brunswick, etc., agreed to serve no longer in this war against France. The marshal was reproached for not having forced them to surrender their arms, but he had despatched a courier to Versailles with the request to send him new instructions as quickly as possible, and this courier was detained for a long time. Either the articles contained in this convention had occasioned long discussions in the council, or, what is more probable, Mme. de Pompadour and the ministers were jealous of the brilliant glory with which the marshal was covering himself; the fact is, the decision was given only a few days before the battle of Rosbach. These ministers from their cabinet pretended to know better what should be done than the man who was on the spot and could take advantage of existing circumstances.

Moreover, the Duke of Cumberland had been recalled, and the one commanding during his absence had no power to treat. They were obliged to await the arrival of Prince Ferdinand, who succeeded him. This combination of events caused the failure of the operation, and gave the troops, who were already dispersing, time to gather themselves together.

Impartial historians will not fail to state that the correspondence which passed between Richelieu and the Prince de Soubise shows plainly that the latter would not have been defeated had he followed the advice of the marshal. He never tired of warning him to distrust the King of Prussia, who would overtake him at the very moment when he least expected it. He begged him to be prepared to withstand him, and expressed his inten-

tion of joining him, when they together would follow him up as far as Magdeburg. This was the marshal's project. His letters are still in existence, and we have stated nothing which cannot be fully substantiated.

It is known that the King of Prussia had spies at Versailles, for he knew that the marshal had received orders to put his army into winter quarters before Richelieu knew it himself. Ficher, disguised as a coal-seller, heard this prince say in Magdeburg: "To-morrow M. de Richelieu will receive orders to evacuate Halberstadt. I shall have to fight against this little Soubise, and I will settle his business."

The Marshal de Belle-Isle was suspected of corresponding with him, because he passed a courier with a passport of the marshal without questioning his movements, and it was afterwards discovered that his courier went to the camp of the King of Prussia.

However that may be, the loss of the battle of Rosbach was the principal cause of the inexecution of the convention of Closter-Seven. Mme. de Pompadour, who was miserable on account of the disaster which had befallen the prince whom she protected, expressed her sorrow to M. de Richelieu; the king wrote to him also, and bade him cherish his friends in misfortune, and he would help to unite with his own army the remnant of M. de Soubise's troops.

It was at Stervik, after having left Halberstadt that M. de Richelieu learned that M. de Soubise had just been defeated. The enemy rallied; those who were upon the Lair, and others ready to pass the Elbe, united.

The marshal thought best to march against him with the remnant of his army, in order to see if the enemy was willing to execute the compact of the convention.

Though he had received the order of the court too late to accept the interpretation which the enemy had made of the terms of the capitulation, he thought that with the rest of his troops he could insist upon its execution and remove all obstacles; but the enemy had had time to unite near Stade and the marshal saw that it would be imprudent to become involved in a strange country especially in the winter season and opposed to a force which outnumbered his own. He occupied an advantageous position where he awaited the troops which were to join him, then went to Dresden and to Zel where his army guarded the city and the castle. The rest of his troops were posted to the right and left along the Lair.

Prince Ferdinand, who had taken the command of the army of the enemy, was not slow in marching against the marshal, who took all the necessary precautions to defend himself well. The two armies camped on either side of the Lair within gunshot distance until Christmas eve. The marshal, having received the reinforcements which he expected notwithstanding the cold weather, determined to pass the Lair and fight the Prince Ferdinand. The troops crossed the river gayly, but Ferdinand broke up camp during the night and retired upon the Elbe. The marshal could not follow him as he was wholly unprepared and the cold continued severe However he made a plan of campaign for the winter

which he was obliged to submit to the court. He then came back to Paris and was replaced by the Count de Clermont.

We do not doubt that had the marshal been supported by the ministers, this would have been the most brilliant campaign of the war.

Richelieu is justly accused of having permitted his army to commit depredations without number at the time of his incursions into the principality of Halberstadt.

He believed that by so doing he would punish the enemy for violating a treaty; but he was, nevertheless, wrong in authorizing these disorders. His troops forced the King of Prussia to have the following letter written to the marshal by his brother, Prince Henry; it bears the date of Jan. 30th, 1758.

"MONSIEUR:—

"After the horrible disorders and depredations which the French troops have committed in their last incursion, which was made into the principality of Halberstadt, I have an order from the king to inform you that we shall act with the same inhumanity and barbarity in the lands of the allies of the king of France; and that henceforward we shall let the French officers, prisoners of war, suffer the degrading treatment which your troops have inflicted upon the subjects of His Majesty.

"These are the very words in which the king bids me inform you of his intentions.

"I am with the most perfect esteem and consideration, your affectionate friend,

"HENRY OF PRUSSIA."

This letter is very different from the one written to him sometime before by the King of Prussia; but it is true he had not yet won the battle of Rosbach. It is well known how he made Richelieu mediator of the peace, and how he told him that a nephew of the Grand Cardinal de Richelieu should sign treaties as well as win battles, and that he who had won a statue at Genoa, who had conquered the Isle of Minorca notwithstanding immense obstacles and who was upon the point of subjugating lower Saxony, could do nothing more glorious than procure peace to Europe.

But now the great deeds of the marshal came to an end; henceforth he interested himself in petty intrigues of the court, in theatricals, and spent much of his time in the society of women.

Had Louis XV. not survived his illness at Metz, how many tears would have been spared! France would have pronounced him their best king! An eulogy upon him would have been transmitted to our children and when the details of his illness and death were recounted, they would have been moved to tears!

Had Richelieu been killed after the agreement made at the Abbey of Closter-Seven, how many disasters would have been averted! People would have attributed their misfortunes to his death!

How many kings, generals and ministers have left a great reputation and sacred memory simply because they died at the right time.

CHAPTER LXXVIII.

The Marshal de Richelieu takes possession of his government. He has a great display in Bordeaux.—New intrigues with women.—He sends love letters by a guard of the Capuchin monks to a widow.

The Marshal de Richelieu, having come to Paris, and exonerated at the court even by the letters of the ministers, but accused in nearly the whole kingdom of allowing himself to be bribed by the enemy, believed he could not divert himself better from the annoyances which he felt, than by going to Bordeaux and installing himself there in the capacity of governor. He was sensible of the fact that he was expected with impatience and his self love was flattered by the honors that he was about to receive. He brought to this ceremony all the splendor that he could muster, and he consulted the most ancient archives to find out what were the rights and prerogatives attached to the place. He arrived by way of Blaye, where vessels, which the city of Bordeaux had richly decorated, conducted him into port. When he appeared, all the ships, foreign as well as French, fired salutes, and the Castle *Trompette* answered them. Military music preceded his ship and on arriving at the *Place Royale* he found a triumphal arch, where the parliament was to greet him. Then he mounted his horse,

passed through the whole city, followed by the nobility of the province and of his house, who were also on horseback, magnificently dressed, and betook himself to the cathedral, where the archbishop and the clergy came to meet him. After the *Te Deum* he was conducted back, in the same style, to the Palace of the Government, which had been prepared by the city for his reception.

Never had a governor so magnificent a reception. He seemed to wish to revive the imposing pomp which had impressed him in early childhood at the court of Louis XIV. Invested with a portion of the authority of his successor, he believed he ought to represent in a worthy manner, his master; he stood in the king's place in Bordeaux. He was preceded by a guard, of which the captain was a very good gentleman. He neglected no occasion to appear with pomp. When he went to church, musicians in his pay awaited to salute his arrival. Guards surrounded his *prie Dieu;* everywhere there was seen the most imposing pageantry.

A few days after his arrival, he gave in his garden a supper of four hundred covers, where the handsomest women were, together with the nobility and the law magistracy. A great masked ball was also given, where a certain mask came often to talk with him. The unknown expressed himself with grace, and seemed to have much intelligence. The marshal begged him to make himself known, as he followed him everywhere. The mask disappeared, but came back afterwards with a paper which he gave to the marshal and escaped with-

out leaving any trace of his flight. He read the following verses :—

> Quoique sous ce déguisement,
> Tu peux me connaître aisément
> Aux seuls sentiments de mon âme;
> Si je te crains, je suis Anglais;
> Si je t'aime, je suis Francais;
> Si je t'adore, je suis femme.

So the marshal received everywhere proofs of love and respect. If the campaign of Hanover offered some reasons for blame, the victor of Mahon made them disappear; they were still repeating the songs so well known to the whole of France, and Richelieu received in Bordeaux only the wildest acclamations. But the aristocracy, who did so little to be loved, did still less to cause this love to continue. These tributes, this homage, all seemed to them as something which was simply their due. Satisfied with the exterior signs which constraint imposed, they did not take any care to retain the hearts that gave themselves up to them at first but were afterwards repelled by their injustice and their pride. Hardly did they ever take a step to be loved, but they took hundreds to be hated.

Such was Richelieu at Bordeaux. At first there were nothing but fêtes and pleasures; nearly every evening he gave a supper with a hundred covers. He was generally the only man at his table surrounded by twenty-nine handsome women. He was gallant with all; addressed to them agreeable words and if he preferred one, he hid his choice with so much art that he did not arouse jealousy in the others. He managed events so

well that he found himself soon *tête à tête* with the one who had made the greatest impression on him. What do not the women accomplish in such circumstances? His measures were so well taken that the most honest women remained, without wishing it, alternately alone with the marshal, who, not believing in virtue, rarely missed his triumph.

Soon those, who preserved some principle, refused the honor of being admitted to the table of the governor, and by degrees he found himself surrounded by those only whom the absence of good principles rendered the easiest. His palace became a house, which modesty could hardly pass without blushing.

We know that the people of Bordeaux loved with passion the dice pools, which parliament had several times prohibited; they found at Richelieu's what was necessary to satisfy their tastes. In his drawing-room, they sacrificed often a hundred victims to this terrible passion. Rich merchants exposed their fortunes to the chances of the dice-box; women ruined their households to run the chance of the dice, and young people, carried away by their example, did not blush to rob their parents in order that they might take part in this ruinous game.

The taste for gambling which he stimulated, formed one of the reproaches which decent people had against him. And the luxury which he displayed created the desire of imitating him. We are all inclined to follow examples which are set before us, and nothing seduces so much as the aspect of wealth and the attraction of pleasure. Expenses increased in every family; the women, who are

always tormented with the desire of pleasing, studied very particularly the refined and costly art of the toilet; fashions followed one another, and lewd women, being attracted to Bordeaux by the reputation of the governor and admitted even into his palace, soon set the fashion for the other woman at the parties and in the theatres. The number of fast women grew prodigiously, and the scandals in proportion. If a favorite were handsome, all the evil that she could do remained unpunished; she tried her charms upon the marshal and always came out victorious, and by so doing was encouraged to defy anew the law. Decent people were indignant; virtuous women avoided appearing in public and the popularity which Richelieu had inspired quickly vanished.

They had, besides, soon to reproach him with acts of arbitrary authority. He had quarrels with parliament for having made troublesome use of *lettres de cachet.* Thence came the hatred that he showed against members of the council, and the pleasure that he exhibited in executing the orders of the king which abolished this body in the year 1771.

They were very dissatisfied with the tyranny with which he maintained the right of carrying arms and with the boldness of his agents. He was a feared despot serving only the lost women, and detested by the whole middle class; for it was always upon that class that his despotism fell with the least consideration. He imprisoned many persons merely for daring to blame his conduct.

He estranged from himself all hearts; the women even,

except the lowest class, saw nothing more in the governor than an unchangeable debauchee, who passed his time in low pleasures. They were especially incensed by an answer that he made to the intendant, who complained to him about the great quantity of low girls in the city. He represented to the marshal that it would be well to make an example and to lock up those who conducted themselves the worst, so as to restrain the others. "Why exceptions?" he answered, "all deserve an equal punishment, and I will have them all locked up. To do that I will order that the gates of the city be closed."

This sarcasm, so indecent in the mouth of the representative of authority, naturally incensed respectable women, and they were furious, with good reason, to see themselves classed with the despicable protégées of the marshal. However, even now, while he was earning the execration of the inhabitants of Bordeaux, he still had the talent to conciliate them, when he had occasion to speak to them. Those that he did not love, while severely treated, had no occasion to change their manner of thinking; but his friends, in spite of his vices, were forced to acknowledge his amiability. When he had need of them, he was a chameleon, who changed his form every moment to please them. He upheld the nobility, and they were nearly all for him. The parliament, which struggled continually against his authority,—indeed not for the interest of the people, but for the preservation of its own prerogatives,—counted also amongst its members a number of friends of the governor, and that at a time

when several of them were disposed to indict him. In short, Richelieu, hated as he was, had only to try in order to recover all the love that he had lost.

We have said that he gave great suppers, and that he was nearly always at a special table with twenty-nine women. One evening he desired that this number be composed only of those who had shown favors to him; it seemed to him funny to assemble them all together at supper. He alone could point them out; he gave the list, and the choice was kept within the charmed circle. None of the invited ladies suspected her neighbor to have any particular claims upon the governor, and every word he said was interpreted by each one of them in her own favor. Since there were many traits of resemblance between them, and their history was about the same, at least as far as he was concerned, it was easy for Richelieu to make each believe that he spoke only of her, and all, at the same time, fixed their eyes upon him with a wise smile. The meal was punctuated with equivocal sayings, which amused him very much; but at the end of dessert, when the servants had retired, the hero of the fête conducted himself with less reserve.

He related adventures that had happened to him with many of these women, and it gave him pleasure to observe the movements upon the faces of those of whom he spoke. He then said to them that he had had, the night before, a most agreeable dream. "I was," he continued, "with twenty-nine women, about whose beauty and merit it was difficult to come to a decision. None of them needed any art to please me, and I have been

happy enough to fasten for awhile their inclination. I was intoxicated by the luck of uniting them together, and being unable to inclose them all in my heart, I could not resist the pleasure of making them understand how happy I had been by their possession. I did not wish that my indiscretion could wound any of them ; however, I was glad that they all would know their peculiar merits and the extent of the favors which had been given to me. Admit for a moment that it be you, ladies, and I will tell to each one of you what I addressed to these women whom my dream gave me so generously."

Then he reminded them, each one in turn, what had passed between them, what he had observed to be particularly attractive in them, and what each one of them had done in their tête-à-tête, and in general what he had then remarked. The whole was accompanied by compliments analogous to the subject. Some of the ladies dropped their eyes ; others laughed. However, the silence which lasted a long time was interrupted by Richelieu, who asked them what they thought of his dream. "I think," said a woman on leaving the table, "that you are a great impertinent, and that these twenty-nine women were still more foolish than you were indiscreet."

This sally brought back the good humor. Many of them vied with one another in politeness in leaving the dining hall; none wished to leave first, and all said, "The honor is due to the oldest; we must look for the date of the marriage."

CHAPTER LXXIX.

Tableau of the deer-park.—Shameful old age of Louis XV.—His mistresses and secret adventures.—Mme. de Maillé-Brezé, Mlle. de Romans, Mlle. Tiercelin, and other favorites.

WE have arrived at the most shameful part of the modern history of our kings. While the ambitious views or envy of the courtiers condemned to death the principal heads of the kingly family; while our generals betrayed the country, and the ministers signed dishonorable treaties, and the finances were in the greatest disorder, the indolent Louis XV. occupied himself only with his secret pleasures. No business of the government was agreeable to him; that of the finances "made him lose his wits"; he preferred that of the etiquette of his court, of which the details were immense; and he occupied himself more with that of foreign affairs, provided that there was in the secret correspondence of Broglie, a plenty of scandalous anecdotes concerning the princes and especially the princesses of his contemporaries. Concerning the state of finances, the fast life of the king augmented their disorder. A considerable dowry was given to his illegitimate children; they were married to officers whom he afterwards advanced. The education of his children was not only very burdensome, but he had also, afterwards, to provide for their establishment. A courtier who followed with as much exactitude as

possible, the scandalous chronicle of the time, assured the author of these Memoirs that Louis XV. had established, in his life, more than eighteen hundred young ladies. They were given beautiful little houses in the park, of which Liebel, first *valet-de-chambre*, had the superintendance, at the charge of the public treasury. Let us go through some of these houses; the most particular Memoirs of the time have brought down to us the description of some of the favorites of Louis.

Liebel did not always choose the women to be devoted to the pleasures of Louis. This prince, who threw without ceasing his curious looks upon everybody that surrounded him, often chose, himself, in his trips to Paris, those who attracted him. Various private persons devoted themselves to serve his inclination, amongst others the financiers Beaujon, Bertin, etc.

Mademoiselle de Romans.

Louis, having fallen in love with Mlle. de Romans, could never bear to be without this new favorite, who followed him in his journeys to Bellevue, Compiègne, and in his other travels. He loved her natural kindness and her great affection, which he had not found in other women. She had such a handsome figure and such a handsome face that she was called one of the marvels of nature. Mlle. de Romans, who was aware that she was loved by the king, took advantage of this weakness of the prince, and caused her child to be declared child of the king. Hardly was the son born, who was afterwards Abbé de Bourbon, than she wished that it should bear

all the distinct marks of his birth ; she put on him a blue ribbon, and nourished him herself. Mme. de Pompadour, devoured with jealousy because she was observing the well marked attachment of the king for Mlle. de Romans, took advantage of a moment of indifference of the king to cause the child to be taken away from her rival, and sent out of the country, so that, if possible, all traces of him should be lost. The child was taken away by the police. Sartine who had charge of him gave him to one of his clerks, to whom he paid a thousand louis a year, for keeping him.

When Louis XV. died, Mlle. de Romans, disheartened at her double loss, had no other evidence of the birth of her child than a series of letters that she had received from the king which gave proof of his origin. She sent them to Louis XVI. with a copy of the act of baptism, and the king desired that this child be introduced to him. He was found at Longjumeou in a linen blouse, the clerks having appropriated the pension to their own use. Never a child more resembled his father as to the face and habits. The Abbé de Bourbon was as indolent, as voluptuous and as fast as Louis XV. The portrait of the one was very often taken for that of the other.

Mme. de Romans had the handsomest hair that was ever seen ; it descended to her knees ; she had in 1765 such a great quantity that she covered herself with it as with an overcoat. Louis XV. called her his beautiful Madeline ; he admired the beauty of her figure and her bewitching poses. Mme. de Romans, who lived still in the year 1792, preserved at that time much of her beauty.

She was Mme. de Cavanhac, widow of a soldier. No bad action could be ascribed to her while she was in favor; she was interesting, handsome and always kind.

Mademoiselle Tiercelin.

The king, on coming one day to the Tuileries, followed by an immense multitude, noticed with interest a child nine years old, who was very tall for her age and had an angelic face. The king looked at her much, praised several times her face and seemed curious to know who she was.

Lebel, entirely devoted to the pleasures of his master, did not appear as if he noticed the impression that she made upon him; but the following day he came back to Paris, took information and gave orders to Sartine to put his spies in motion.

The question was to know who was the father of a child of great beauty, nine years old, who was led the evening before by a governess to the Tuileries. Sartine, the most able of the police lieutenants and perhaps the greatest scoundrel, discovered her. There was a bargain made with the governess, who disappeared after having received for the child fifty louis.

It seemed pleasing to the old Louis XV. to educate this child for his pleasures; he destined for this infamous education several of his small rooms and was pleased to serve her as teacher, servant and governess. He brought her her meals with exactness, he advanced all her desires; he studied her tastes and did not allow anybody to approach his pupil, to whom he did not make himself

known. "I detest you," said Mlle. Tiercelin to Louis XV. her jailer; "you are as ugly as a beast." She confided her strange adventures to Mme. de B., from whom we have a part of these strange anecdotes.

The king by care and attentions succeeded in having himself loved by this child, when she had come to a more advanced age. He gave her a pension of thirty thousand livres and paid her debts every year.

It is difficult to follow the loves or rather the clandestine enjoyments of Louis XV. We may recall his passing attachments with Mme. de Choiseul-Romanet, with the Baroness de Salis, from whom he obtained favors by force and who, in despair, committed suicide; with Mme. de Martinville; Mlle. Grandi; Mlle. de Ville, a lost girl and Mme. de Beaun, author of some plays.

There could be written a book upon each one of these women, especially upon their relations with the ministers or with the courtiers who procured them for the king.

CHAPTER LXXX.

The Count du Barry shows to the marshal his mistress, Mlle. Lange. —He gives a supper in his pavilion of the boulevard.—Du Barry informs the marshal of his projects.—He endeavors with all means to introduce Mlle. Lange to Lebel.—She becomes the mistress of the king.—They try to make her hate M. de Choiseul. —Death of Lebel produced by an outburst of Louis.

SINCE the death of Mme. de Pompadour, Louis, given up to all kinds of debauches, had no longer any particular mistress. The marshal, who at first had blamed his taste for Mme. d'Etioles, because she was not of the nobility, wished the king to make a choice amongst the ladies that had been introduced. He thought it beneath a sovereign to descend into a lower class, pretending that the title of mistress of the king was important enough to be given only to a woman of the highest nobility. The Duchess of Grammont, sister of the Duke de Choiseul, had made all the necessary advances to catch the king; but her harsh ways and her disagreeable manners caused her to be soon excluded from that position; besides the title of sister of a minister was motive enough for her to be an object of intrigue.

Richelieu, who was sometimes in very bad company, had spoken of his desire of having the king make the acquaintance of the Count du Barry, a man too well known to lose any time in speaking about his reputation. Immediately the brain of this intriguer, fertile in projects,

brought forth the idea that he should rid himself, in favor of the sovereign, of the mistress of whom he was tired and whom he was in the habit of turning over to his friends, whenever he was unable to pay his debts to them.

It is true that this woman, called Mlle. Lange, was very handsome, and it was especially upon her charming figure, and her still more seducing looks, that Du Barry based his hopes. He conducted this great speculation at M. de Richelieu's, who knew her already and who gave her several suppers in his pavilion of the boulevard. Du Barry was resolved to enable the duke to judge personally of the attractions of which boasted, and said that he destined her for Louis. Richelieu smiled with pity, and assured him that if he had no other projects with which to make his fortune, he would not do it very soon.

Du Barry, filled with this notion which sustained his confidence, maintained on the contrary that he would succeed, and that he would be clever enough to bring Mlle. Lange, himself, into the arms of the king, even if nobody else were willing to conduct her there. The marshal related twenty times, that he was much amused at this supper, on account of the many foolish acts of Du Barry, and that he had said jokingly, " Well, go to see Lebel, perhaps by his influence your favorite will obtain for one day the honors of the Louvre. On the following day, Du Barry went in the early morning to the first *valet-de-chambre*, and, since he already had made several proposals to Lebel, this latter was not long in guessing the motive of this visit. Indeed, hardly

were they alone when he said to this agent of the pleasures of the master, that he came to speak with him about a goddess, about an angel, to whom none of the women, who were under consideration for the king, could compare. Lebel, accustomed to exaggerations, asked the name of such a rare beauty, but unfortunately the reputation of Mlle. Lange destroyed all the praises that he had sounded about her divinity. Lebel left Du Barry disturbed, but not without hope; the latter flattered himself that he would be luckier in the future and dared a second attempt. But Lebel's door remained closed to him.

Du Barry, accustomed to insults, was not scared on account of the one which he received and those that followed, for Lebel remained always invisible to him; he knew that tenacity is a surer means of success, than merit and intelligence, and he did not give in. He finally met Lebel, and at last obtained, by being importunate, a rendezvous for the following day.

Feeling encouraged by this first step, Du Barry did not forget, in order to give more importance to his visit, to bring with him Mlle. Lange; he introduced her to the *valet-de-chambre.* "I leave her to you," he said, "look and examine, and if she is not an angel, I consent to lose the honor!" He knew very well that in this respect he had been for a long time on the safe side. Mlle. Lange, being alone with the examiner, first posed as very timid, and this embarrassment enhanced the charms, which the severe judge could not observe without being greatly moved. Finally she cast her hand-

some eyes on him, and by an apparently involuntary motion uncovered a very handsome neck as white as alabaster. The old *valet-de-chambre* could not withhold himself from applying a kiss. Mlle. Lange, who had learned her lesson, did not oppose any resistance to Lebel; she contented herself with saying, "If it were not you!" The old man, carried away, agreed that Du Barry was right, and that never anything as handsome had offered itself to his eyes. Everything was arranged and Du Barry, informed of what had passed, hastened to Richelieu to announce to him that Lebel was in ecstasies, and that his own mistress would pass soon from the apartment of the *valet-de-chambre* into that of the monarch himself.

However, this man, though he was seduced, had some scruples. He had promised to place the new candidate in the way of his majesty, but he judged by her past life that this woman was not too worthy to be offered to the king. However, his promise bound him; he imagined that Louis, if he gave any attention to Mlle. Lange, would only have a moment of caprice for her, and he determined to submit her to the gaze of his master.

The first time the king gave no attention at all. Mlle. Lange, always directed by her intriguer, redoubled her entreaties to Lebel, that he should show her off to more advantage. Chance served her; the king perceived her, fixed his eyes a long time upon her, and asked Lebel in the evening, who that woman was of whom he had remarked the carriage and the figure. Lebel carried

away by friendship gave a favorable report, and soon it was decided that she would have a private meeting with the prince.

Du Barry, intoxicated with joy, hastened a second time to relate his good fortune to the marshal, who now believed that this fool would be lucky enough to accomplish his purpose. The roué (everybody knows that this was the name given to Du Barry) affirmed to the marshal that it was a moment for playing all or nothing. Everything is lost, he said, if she should not produce a great sensation, and I must risk everything to produce it.

Mlle. Lange, taught anew and well disposed to try her fortune, betook herself to the place which had been designated to her. No one was ignorant to what a high degree the king was charmed with his new conquest. What Du Barry had foreseen was about to happen. It was an entirely new enjoyment for his majesty. The prince found, what was very precious for him, a woman who possessed the art of reviving his desires, and he found himself transported into an unknown world.

The fairy who produced such great miracles grew dearer to him from day to day. This taste, which was believed to be a passing one, became a kind of passion; every time there came new discoveries which seemed admirable to a used-up man, and everybody was astonished at the rapid ascendancy of a woman, who, according to appearances, ought not to have held him longer than a moment.

It was then that the mind of Du Barry became puffed up; his dreams seemed about to be realized. M. de Richelieu, himself, astonished by these adventures, be-

lieved that after what had happened, everything was possible. He called on the new favorite, and saw her secretly in his pavilion, not any longer as a *grisette*, but as a woman who was to become of importance. He gave her advice, instructed her as to the court, and warned her especially that she had to fear M. de Choiseul, who would not see her being raised without jealousy, and his sister who had ridiculous pretensions to take the place of the favorite. Richelieu saw with sorrow that a woman of such low rank was on the point of playing such a great rôle; but as he was accustomed to take advantage of everything, he did not wish to miss an occasion such as that to help himself.

The roué, after having dreamed a long time, believed that his dream would be imperfect if his precious Lange should not become the acknowledged mistress. He consulted his oracle, M. de Richelieu, who was scared by the enterprise, and who, in the bottom of his soul, did not wish to let things go so far as that. Du Barry, not being accustomed to be held back by any consideration, assured him that the obstacles were easy to overcome; that he had a stupid brother, who was so much in pursuit of money that he would marry his female cow-tender in order to get it; that this man was specially cut out for the affair, and that before two months would pass, Mlle. Lange would be a countess; once having a title, the introduction would become a question of right, and everything would be arranged by this happy marriage. He agreed that the new favorite was not yet ripe for the rôle which he destined for her; but, at the same time, he

congratulated himself on having in his own family all that was necessary to insure his success. Mlle. du Barry was a mentor, who could teach the most stupid woman to become an intriguer; she could animate marble, and she would be the spring that should moved the statue which he intended to set up.

The passion of the king for Mlle. Lange increased; it was a delirium, which took away even his reasoning power; he wished that everybody should render homage to the beauty whom he adored, and he seized eagerly the proposal of marriage with the Count du Barry. We shall not relate the well-known facts: it will be sufficient for us to say that Lebel, being frightened by the too constant love of his master, and still more by the introduction of a girl that he hardly had dared to offer him, and fearing the reproaches that could be made him in the future, took the liberty of representing to the king, that, charming as his protégée might be, he had imagined that she would be only a flitting fancy, and that he loved his master too much not to inform him that the introduction at court of such a woman would cause murmuring through the whole of France.

"My poor Dominic," answered the king, (he called him always by this name) "I am sorry if that troubles you; but your protégée is splendid; I am foolish with her; I wish to give her a public proof of my tenderness; she will be introduced and no one will say a word." The servant insisted, and, being carried away a little too much by his zeal, he dared to point out to him what wrong he would do himself in the mind of his subjects; Louis, be-

coming impatient, took the tongs, and, raising them over his confidant, told him, with a strong expression, to hold his tongue, or he would strike him.

Lebel, being accustomed to say everything to his master, was seized with terror by this savage behavior. He was subject to bilious attacks; as a result of this scene a violent illness beset him, and two days afterwards he died. This death was natural; he did not take poison as they represent in the life of Louis XV., where, as we have already said, one finds statements of all kinds that are easily disproved.

Mlle. Lange did not regret the man who wished to oppose himself to the king's marks of tenderness for her. He was soon forgotten, though he helped her to take the first step, which conducted her to honors and fortune. She had a more dangerous enemy in M. de Choiseul, who seemed to have greater talents for persuading: but the king, fatigued by all the remonstrances and carried away by a passion which he could not control, answered him, that when he summoned him or had him work with him, that it was to treat of the general affairs of the kingdom, and not to annoy him with discussing those of his heart.

CHAPTER LXXXI.

Mme. du Barry is introduced.—She makes the people wait the day of her introduction.—The king is much disquieted.—M. de Choiseul is disgraced.—Richelieu wishes to enter into the council but cannot succeed ; he wishes, at least, that a man of his family be in the ministry and he names M. d'Aiguillon.—The marshal becomes one of the most zealous servants of the favorite.

MLLE. LANGE having become Countess du Barry by her marriage (everybody knows how this sort of a marriage is made. The husband on receipt of money agrees that he will not even dine that day with his wife and that he will not approach within four leagues of her residence,) with the brother of her old lover, redoubled her efforts to hold the king in captivity. She saw in the king only a simple private man ; she acted without constraint, and the tone of familiarity, which she brought about between him and her, seemed always new to the sovereign ; he could not be without the woman who inspired in him sentiments or sensations of which, up to then, he had had no idea. All the Du Barrys came to the favorite and established themselves there. They regarded her as belonging to them. They arrogated the right to give her advice, and from this moment the royal treasury actually became their private purse. The young countess, still astonished at being placed so near the throne, not understanding the customs, new to everything that surrounded her, with exception of her royal

lover, little adapted for knowing how to conduct herself in court, listened eagerly to the lessons which were given to her. It was in this particular study that M. de Richelieu was useful to her. He saw very well that Mme. du Barry was going to rule, and the man, who had hardly taken notice of Mlle. Lange, became the very humble slave of Mme. du Barry.

He was then in the service of the king; he approached him continually. He was a witness of his weakness and of his infatuation, but he took care not to make him the least reproach; on the contrary, he pretended to find as the king himself, that Mme. du Barry was a goddess, and he said to him that it was very just that she receive particular marks of affection from his majesty. He had already conceived the project of making use of the ascendancy of this woman by ousting from the ministry M. de Choiseul, of whom he was very jealous, whom he considered a disturber in business, and whom he accused loudly of corrupting the military. The family claim, which the friends of this minister pressed with so much emphasis, seemed to him a puerility in politics, because he said sovereigns had no longer parents or friends when particular interests commanded them. It would be better, he said, to have disciplined armies, and money in the coffers; that is the only means to insure the quietness of a kingdom, and to make the monarch powerful at home and feared abroad.

It was without doubt, less for the welfare of the state than on account of personal hatred, that he desired to upset this colossus, which seemed to be invulnerable and

the arms of which appeared to enwrap the whole kingdom. Up to that time Richelieu, too politic to declare himself the enemy of a powerful man by whom he was not loved, had employed with him the vain demonstrations, the language, and the style, always empty of sense, of which the people of the courts seemed to have the exclusive possession. He had developed in himself the highest art of the courtier, who, without ever having the courage to appear what he really is, expects in the decisive moment either to fall at the feet of the idol, or else to pull it down. He believed that the favor of Mme. du Barry would forward the moment, which had been expected so long, and he watched the smallest circumstances to take advantage of them.

While people occupied themselves with the fall of M. de Choiseul, he, proud of the power which he was enjoying, counted too much upon the laziness of the monarch whom he freed by his activity from all work; and was persuaded that he was absolutely necessary to him, while boasting about the alliance that he had just made with the House of Austria. Choiseul therefore did not occupy himself with the secret councils of the favorite; his self love made him believe that he was safe from all reverses.

Besides, he could not imagine that the triumph of Mme. du Barry would last for long. His creatures, who always held up before his eyes what he had done for France, assured him at the same time, that this woman would soon fall back into the class from which she had been drawn, and the king would recognize sooner or later the indecency of her conduct, while he would be unable

to forget how much he owed to such a minister as he was.

M. de Choiseul, disposed to credit all these opinions notwithstanding his intelligence, notwithstanding the knowlege that he had concerning the court, trusted too much to his credit. He not only treated the favorite without common politeness, but even on several occasions with disdain. Finally he conducted himself so imprudently that Mme. du Barry, who had no motive for hating him but who followed, mechanically, the impulses which were given to her, became finally the personal enemy of him who showed her so little consideration. So we may say that M. de Choiseul was the victim of his presumption; that he lost the ministry not from the creditable reason of having been unwilling to make a step towards a woman that he despised, but because he was altogether too certain of the need that the master had of him; and because he was persuaded that neither this woman nor any other, would ever have enough power to make him lose his place.

This security was observed by Richelieu and he believed himself then sure of success. He saw the minister oftener and one would have said that a sincere, though without doubt astonishing, friendship was growing between them. The returning of the courtier made M. Choiseul smile and, while distrusting him, he scorned the idea that his powerless envy could hurt him; he foresaw, indeed, some little trouble, which he expected quietly, as the rock which sees without apprehension the wave which is going to break itself at its feet.

Finally the much talked of day, which three-quarters of the court could not believe would arrive, was appointed for the introduction of Mme. du Barry. The alarm became general in the opposition party ; M. Choiseul was himself dazed by the shock. He made some useless representations to the king, but was obliged to submit himself to the necessity. However, he always believed that the humiliating introduction would not take place and that his master would still recede from this inconsiderate step.

But the minister forgot that Richelieu, calculating his interests and his vengeance, hardly ever left the monarch. His charge as first gentleman, of which he filled the functions, gave him great opportunities. He was an old confidant of the sovereign, and it was natural enough that he would be consulted in an affair of the heart. The marshal, notwithstanding his desire for seeing the place of the favorite occupied by a woman of high standing, believing himself able to count upon Mme. du Barry, and seeing the king bewitched by her, never ceased talking to him about her grace and beauty. He beguiled the king's time in relating histories of the kings and emperors, who had followed the impulses of their hearts in marrying even women of the lowest rank, and he added that a King of France could well afford to give distinction to a woman that he preferred over any other. Louis listened with avidity to his favorite and thereby was blind to the sorrow of his children. She on her side, beseeched the monarch, and, notwithstanding his irresolutions, the presentation was decided upon.

The great day arrived. The whole court was at Versailles; notwithstanding all that had been done, there were wagers made that Mme. du Barry would not be presented. The appointed hour arrived, but Mme. du Barry did not appear. M. de Choiseul and Richelieu were in the chamber of the king, who seemed to be very agitated; he looked, every moment, at his watch. He was very uneasy as the time flew by, with no news. At this moment all the remonstrances which had been made came back into his mind; he seemed to recognize the absurdity of the scene which was about to take place. M. de Choiseul was triumphant; he believed that the ceremony would not take place; and Richelieu, in a corner of the window, no longer knew what to expect.

During this delay, so trying for both sides, Mme. du Barry was detained in Paris by her hair-dresser, not knowing the consequences of the long waiting which she occasioned, and occupied in trying to increase her charms. She wished to force even her enemies to find her handsome. An hour more or less seemed to her a trifle in finishing her toilet.

At last, Richelieu perceived a carriage, and hastened to announce to the monarch the arrival of the favorite. Immediately the agitation of the king disappeared; the pleasure which he felt chased away all his black thoughts. He had made up his mind to scold her but when she was announced he found her so handsome, so celestial, so radiant, that he could only admire her.

Richelieu, in his turn, enjoyed the discomfiture of the minister. He looked then at Mme. du Barry, and struck

by her elegant figure and the noble mien that she bore, he recognized no longer the insignificant Lange, who had come once to implore his assistance. Even the people who felt despair on account of this presentation were forced to admit that, if beauty and elegance entitle one to approach the throne, Mme. du Barry ought to enjoy that privilege.

We will not enter into the well-known details. This day was the declared triumph of libertinism and from this moment the king lost what small amount of self-esteem he had possessed. Although Mme. du Barry was not a mischievous woman, the choice of her was really unworthy of a sovereign; afterwards this woman, to whom the court was an unknown country, was obliged to allow herself to be led by perverted people, who deceived her continually, in order to get wealthy or to procure places for the bad persons who were devoted to them. Therefore Mme. du Barry must not be too much blamed; all those around her led her astray, and abused her good nature, in order to commit injustice. The first fault lay in the king, the second in the dull and eager courtiers who surrounded both.

M. de Choiseul finally perceived that he had made a mistake in not following the chariot of Mme. du Barry, but he could no longer retrace his steps. He believed that by increasing his activity, he would make himself more necessary than ever to the sovereign, and he was not altogether deceived in his expectations. The king, being accustomed to his exact manner in presenting business, to the clearness of his ideas, which, avoiding

all discussions, gave him only the trouble of making his signature, gave at first little attention to the complaints of his mistress against this minister.

The very decided disgust which Louis had for war, was well known ; he could not avoid hearing that M. de Choiseul, in order to have more consideration and power, did not handle carefully enough the Englishmen, and that he was only studying how to give them occasion again to begin hostilities. These complaints made some impression on the king, who, fatigued by the disasters of the war in 1756, had sworn that he would not have any more war ; however, they were not important enough to decide him to send away his minister. It was not friendship, but habit which carried him along ; he feared that he might not meet again an able minister that would save him all the work, and, notwithstanding all the accusations, he was resolved to keep him.

Richelieu, who knew Louis well, foresaw that he would not have strength of character enough to resist attacks. Careful beforehand in naming a minister who would be convenient for him, he was not indisposed to allow the choice to fall upon himself. Up to that time he had contented himself with ruling in his own government, and with seducing women ; he had been an enemy of steady work ; it has been seen that he neglected to take advantage of the intrigues of Mme. de Lauraguais, who wished him to follow M. de Belle-Isle. This lady was no more, but he remembered what she had intended to do for him. Feeling the infirmities of age, he knew that he could no longer occupy himself merely in

pleasing, and that what he was losing on one side he must gain on the side of ambition. If he could not be minister, he resolved to obtain at least his entrance into the council.

He had a competitor in his relative, the Duke d'Aiguillon, so well known by his association with M. de la Chalotais, and who owed to the impression that he made upon the mind of Mme. du Barry, and to the friendship of Richelieu, that he was not condemned by the parliament of Paris. The marshal, seeing the animosity of that body which intended to be avenged for the wrongs done to one of the members of the parliament of Bretagne, and which considered his affair as its own; fearing, besides, the consequences of this revenge for his relative, had engaged the king (who was already informed by his mistress) to withdraw all the papers from this trial, which was in the hands of the parliament; the monarch, usually weak, but spurred by a personal repulsion against the magistracy, went out of his character to do an act which wounded justice; M. d'Aiguillon, without being absolved, was withdrawn from the power of the law.

This duke, though perhaps not guilty of desiring to maintain his authority as commander of the province of Bretagne to the disadvantage of parliament, thought only of taking advantage of the king's favor. He was ambitious to get the place of the Duke de Choiseul, and, following the lead of Richelieu and Mme. du Barry, he, also, allied himself with the chancellor to make one more enemy for the minister, whom he wished to oust.

The chief justice intended to destroy the parliament. The king, who desired the success of this operation, believed he would not be able to reign quietly unless he was spared further interference from the troublesome courts. He was made to believe that the minister was one of their strongest pillars, and that as long as he remained in office, his influence would delay the ruin of the parliament. So Mme. du Barry and Richelieu got the better of it in the end, and the king decreed the exile of M. de Choiseul.

It was then that Richelieu, freed of M. de Choiseul's opposition, employed all his means to obtain entrance to the council. He had declined the ministry; but he was much pleased that a man of his family had a department in order to enjoy more easily the advantages which depended on it. He only wished to enter into the council to give his advice, and to be informed of its operations. He thought he deserved this favor at least as much as M. de Soubise; but he did not wish to ask for it himself. The favorite demanded it from her royal lover, who answered that M. de Richelieu was too giddy to treat about serious affairs, and that he was better fitted to carry on a love intrigue than to give wise advice in a council. He forgot without doubt that he had conducted himself very well in all his negotiations, and this refusal can be attributed only to a moment of ill-will. The marshal, furious at seeing his hopes destroyed, did all he could to have his relative succeed. M. d'Aiguillon, by his protection, and still more by that of Mme. du Barry, succeeded, therefore, to M. de Choiseul's position. The

marshal had great difficulty in consoling himself for the refusal; what humbled him the most was that the same favor that was refused to him was granted to M. de Soubise.

Nearly always lucky in negotiations as in war, he could be reproached only with his passionate fondness for the women; M. de Soubise, with the same faults, was chiefly known by his having suffered a great defeat. Richelieu had been the slave of the mistress of the king; M. de Soubise had been the fawner. A friend of Mme. de Chateauroux, he had hardly taken time to regret her, before attaching himself to the chariot of Mme. de Pompadour; he had offered her a bed with the king in his castle of Saint-Ouen; he gained notoriety on account of his prodigalities with the girls of the opera and all that he had obtained as general was due merely to his intimacy with the mistresses of the king and to the favor which he enjoyed amongst them. Richelieu could not bear to see this preference, indeed, the balance should have weighed on his side.

These unexpected disagreements with a sovereign, who seemed very much attached to him, undermined his health. It was believed that he was attacked with stoppage; and the President de Gascq wrote him on the subject that, "Having been accustomed for a long time by the temper of his soul and by the manifold events of his life to the greatest excitements, he had, perhaps, not perceived that for two years he had given himself up to a state of mind, very liable to procure to him all those troublesome consequences of chronic disease; he advised

him to take care of himself or he would be obliged to suffer his whole life through."

But time allayed the mental disquietude of the marshal and once the mental part was cured, the physical part soon followed. He used a water which did him a great deal of good; it was merely distilled opium, fermented with beer-yeast and water. This compound he gave to Voltaire in the year 1778, but since it had not the strength to bring back to life a man who was dying, the talk was then, that the marshal had killed him with his opium.

The marshal, who for a long time had given no proofs of tenderness for his son, the Duke de Fronsac, and who at his marriage with Mlle. d'Hautefort had generously given him two thousand écus of pension to maintain his rank as duke and peer (a pension that he soon stopped, however,) moved finally by a more fatherly sentiment, tried to serve himself with the credit that he had with Mme. du Barry to increase the fortune of his son. The problem was to obtain the government of the castle of Trompette, which was worth forty thousand livres of income; but M. de Fumel obtained, on account of his marriage, the place which Richelieu had asked, and which he might reasonably have expected, as it was under his governorship.

He complained bitterly, and the favorite, to compensate him got the king to give from the royal treasury thirty thousand livres of pension to the Duke de Fronsac, he to make use of it until he should receive a government

appointment, of which the proceeds would be at least equivalent to that sum.

The marriage of the dauphin suspended for a moment the bickerings of the court, and excessive expenses were incurred to celebrate the marriage. It was on this occasion that the depredations on the "pocket money" reached their climax. The representation of the opera "Castor et Pollux" alone cost one million; they had constructed for it a beautiful hall, perhaps the most handsome in Europe and certainly the richest. All the people who had charge of these operations and even those who worked for them became wealthy. Money was spent as if there had been an overabundance in the kingdom. A journey to Fontainebleau cost more than two millions; there were employed for the show and the pretended service of the king three hundred thousand livres worth of carriages of the court. At all the parties there was the same extravagance; it was a universal robbery. We will not dwell any longer upon subjects as sad as these which will give testimony forever against a reign where nothing was sacred, and during which the sovereign was always led by scoundrels or intriguers.

Louis having chosen Mlle. de Lorraine, immediately after the princesses of blood, to dance at the marriage of the dauphin, the high nobility, alarmed on account of this distinction, showed how much it stuck at childish etiquette, while it evinced shameful negligence for really important affairs. The House of Lorraine pretended to pass, in all the ceremonies immediately after the princes of blood, and it was this pretension which

the titled people wished to overset. They believed that this preference at a ball would have great consequences. Notes without number were immediately presented to the king. During a long time this great affair was the only topic discussed, and the nobility that never was known to make any claims for the general welfare, was more than one month in convulsions because a princess of a foreign house had danced before they were invited. It is true that the king affirmed that it was without "consequences;" but at the marriage of monsieur the notes were renewed. The reason being the same, the monarch had the kindness to answer to his faithful nobility that the first woman who danced would not have, on account of that, more privileges.

Such were almost the only occupations of the courtiers.

CHAPTER LXXXII.

Continuation of the details of the court.—Death of Louis XV.—Richelieu goes to his governorship.

Du Barry having become an important person by the favor of his former mistress, appeared then as a protector, who pretended to govern the whole kingdom. If we are to believe him, he was the principal of all events; without his foresight, his penetration, his steadfastness, things would not have been as they were; the little woman Lange would have remained unknown, and Choiseul would still have been in his place; the parliament would still have existed, and religious bigots probably would have controlled the mind of the king. The monarch owed to him the good luck that he did not die of ennui; the people of the provinces owed it to him that they were no longer obliged to travel so far, in order to obtain justice; the courtiers owed it to him, that they had a fixed means of obtaining pardon; everybody, according to him, owed him thanks and he could not have been rewarded enough for the good that he had done.

Therefore he talked like a master. I shall give, he said, such a government to this one, such an intendancy to that one; and in the midst of his dream he did not forget to give himself much. One day, intoxicated by

his glory and his happiness, he told the marshal that there was only one thing missing; that was that his own brother should die. "If my sister-in-law becomes a widow, I will cause her to be married by the king; that will not be a long affair; Louis XIV. married the stupid and bigot De Maintenon. I shall have the pleasure of giving to the king my mistress for a wife; that will be very piquant." The marshal laughed much about this; after all that had passed, he nearly believed that the intriguer might be right.

Mme. du Barry, who had been a great novice at the court, had accustomed herself to the ways of grandeur and opulence which surrounded her; she had given up the slang of the country, and did not any longer seem ridiculous, even to her enemies. The past time was nothing to her, but a disagreeable dream, which she tried to forget. Women were almost always ready to flatter her, and entertained her, without ceasing, by artful speeches about her careful education. Mme. du Barry accustomed herself so much to their speeches that she seemed almost to persuade herself that from the first years of her life she had been what she was at present. Having climbed so high, it was natural enough that her head began to be turned a little. The king came to see her at morning and evening. When by accident some affairs, or a slight indisposition prevented him from doing so, he wrote to her, and it was a man, called Serras, who formerly had known Mlle. Lange, and whom the Marshal de Richelieu had attached to her, who was the bearer of these love letters. At the same time he reported to

Richelieu what happened in the house of Mme. du Barry; he told him who was at her house, what she did, and what way the king had spoken to her; and in order to recompense this messenger for his care, he made him governor of the pages of the chamber of the king.

It was this agent, who made Mme. du Barry understand that nobody was better fitted to enter into the council than M. de Richelieu, and this woman wished to recompense her benefactor by obtaining for him this favor. The refusal of the king only temporarily put her out, but the marshal incensed by the answer of his master sent word to the favorite, by this same man, that he renounced the favor.

But Serras at about this time had the misfortune to lose a note which he was charged by the king to deliver. M. de Maupeou found the note accidentally in the gallery. As it was not sealed, he opened it, and recognized the hand writing of the king, and not seeing to whom it was addressed, brought it to his majesty, who got angry at the loss of his note, and who would not make use any longer of a messenger, who was so careless.

The marshal was very angry on account of this accident. Though he was well received at Mme. du Barry's it was convenient to have also a spy near her. He had found out through him that the Duke d'Aiguillon went often to see her while she was in bed, which made Richelieu conjecture that his cousin played with this favorite the same rôle that formerly M. de Choiseul played with M. de Pompadour, a circumstance which did not hurt his advancement. He hoped that Mme. du Barry would not

be less unfavorable to his relative, and he was not mistaken.

The king, in the midst of all the pleasures which were procured for him, sometimes felt ennui and even remorse. One evening, when he was feeling more depressed than usual, he asked Richelieu what he could do to restore himself to his former strength, after so many adventures. "The number of mine was not so great as yours," he added, "yet I feel my forces diminishing every day." "A little rest, sire," answered the courtier, "will give you back what you have lost. It is my remedy and it certainly will be good for you." Then they talked about their younger years; and the marshal who reported this conversation to Mme. de Mauconseil assured her that the king was loath to get old, especially at a time when he had the most amiable mistress that he had known. He told her also that his children had not all the considerations for him that he deserved, and that those, which were rendered to him, were forced. This conversation led them, by degrees, to speak of the general affairs of the kingdom. The king agreed that they were not in such a good state as they might be, and sighed several times. "What do you want," he said; "when people are foolish they do not listen. After all it is their fault and not mine. They do what they wish to; that must not concern me any longer."

When the king was more affected than usual, they increased their eagerness to distract him; the journeys to Saint-Hubert and to Choisy, were multiplied. The latter ones rarely passed by without exhibitions, which

were designed alone for Mme. du Barry. There were hardly any pieces performed in Paris which were not done in homage to her; no débuts were authorized without having been submitted first to her censorship. Mme. Raucourt, who appeared on the French stage with all the pretensions of a woman who united in herself the rarest talents and the purest virtue, was obliged to submit her plans to the whims of the favorite, who had made her a present from her private purse of ten thousand livres. It charmed Mme. du Barry to have played in her house, by a queen of the stage, unimportant parts in the rôle of a man. The actress at first was in great favor with her; but afterwards, either fearing her freshness and her youth which might call the attention of the king to her, or getting tired of her company, she decided to dismiss her, so that Mlle. Raucourt did not remain a long time in her good graces.

The marriage of the Count d'Artois, at which the same prodigality was remarked as in the preceding ones, having given occasion for long feasts, served to distract the monarch a little, who, excepting the moments when he rallied himself to assure his mistress of his tenderness, was morose and testy. This lady wished to outshine the wife of the heir of the throne, and diamonds without number ornamented her most magnificent court dress. At the opera she had a box above that of Mme. la Dauphine, where she enjoyed the pleasure of being more radiant even than the princess.

One day as she passed through a courtyard at Fontainebleau, the sound of merriment reached her. She

lifted her head, and saw at a window of the castle the dauphine and madame, who burst out with laughter. She looked at them proudly and stopped a moment, when either by the force of her haughty countenance indicating that they should withdraw, or because these princesses feared to displease their grandfather by continuing the scene, they disappeared.

Everything gave way to the ascendancy of Mme. du Barry. The princes, who had returned to the court should be condemned on account of their flatteries, because at the beginning, at least, they intended to play an independent rôle, while afterwards they thought themselves honored by being admitted to the intimacy of the favorite. The Prince de Condé, sitting near her in his private theatricals, watched for all the allusions which could be applied to her favorably in order to applaud them with ecstasy. The king, who was often present at these comedies, threw upon him a look of satisfaction; the favorite made him a sign with her handsome hand and the prince left, pleased to have made such an impression. One day there was performed a vaudeville, called "Annette et Lubin," with couplets in honor of Mme. du Barry; it was an empty flattery, for these couplets were worth absolutely nothing and had no merit except that of being sung by actors of the "Comedie Italienne"; but the prince cried out in ecstasy telling them that they were much more excellent than the piece itself.

It was easy to lead astray the imagination of a woman, to whom everybody was burning incense with such zeal.

She cannot be blamed for having allowed herself to be intoxicated by the fumes; the best organized head could not have resisted that. She certainly did not do as much evil as Mme. de Pompadour, who believed herself to have enough genius and intelligence to govern the kingdom; and who brought on the most disastrous events. Mme. du Barry limited her ambition to an exquisite toilet; she had no pretensions nor even taste for mixing herself up with the affairs of the state, which annoyed her much. Only intriguers who had succeeded in dominating her, forced her to enter into statecraft. We must render her the justice that she merited; like nearly all the women of her class she had a good heart and only in the belief that she was doing a good action, which would make her loved by the whole of France, did she cause her lover to commit an injustice.

The king was no longer anything but a kind of phantom; every minister was more king than he; nobody was ignorant of this fact, and this conviction was so strong, it was so well forced into the minds of the court, that it was said that if these gentlemen were to try to have the sovereign sign his own abdication they would succeed.

Mme. du Barry, whose reign they were interested to prolong, was advised not to wait until the monarch should get tired of her, but procure him other enjoyments. She was made acquainted with the proceedings of Mme. de Pompadour; and since it was indifferent to her whether the king remained faithful to her, provided she could glitter at her ease, she followed the plan that was traced out for her. The Marshal de Richelieu

assured her that he had known the king for a long time and that change was necessary for his majesty. Immediately she found in Mlle. de Tournon, who had become her niece, an object worthy of fastening the gaze of the old sultan, and she let her pass into his arms without fear or jealousy; on the contrary, a close friendship formed itself between them. It is said that Mme. du Barry, knowing her superiority in an art which nobody possessed more completely than she herself, was certain that no association could be detrimental to her. Indeed, her lover carried away by inconstancy came back to her soon afterwards much more eager to present her with the apple.

All the means of distracting the king were looked for and when nature put limits to his faculties, they revived his imagination by the recital of love adventures. Richelieu then became the essential man; no one was better able than he to furnish a long succession of episodes, each one more piquant than the other. He varied his narratives in every sort of manner. In one of these conferences Louis, who laughed very much, said, in speaking of the marshal: "He is an old acquaintance of my family; for he was found hidden under the bed of my mother." Richelieu answered that it was but fun; that he had indeed had too much respect for the Duchess de Bourgogne. "Good! good! respect," answered the king, "that is passed over when one is young and loved. Besides you do well to be discreet; for I would be obliged for decency's sake to get angry, since she was my mother."

However, sometimes he showed a little firmness. The Count de Maillebois, having been judged by the Marshals

of France and absent for a long time from the court, had reappeared in Compiègne and did not dare to make the entrance into the chamber, of which he had had the privilege. The Marshal de Richelieu, favoring M. de Maillebois, presented to the king the following note on behalf of his friend:—

"The Count de Maillebois represents to your majesty that he does not know any example when those who had enjoyed the grandes entrées have lost them. Even M. de Lauzun, after disgrace, and an imprisonment of fourteen years, got them from the deceased king, and kept them until his death. All those who hold charters are interested in the plea of M. de Maillebois, who begs your majesty to consider with kindness that it was on account of respect that, when reappearing in Compiègne, he had not made the entrance, though after having consulted the whole court in this respect, he believed that nobody could ever lose his right to it."

The king wrote at the foot of this note, which he returned to the marshal: "Refused. Do not speak to me any more of it." Some time afterwards he was more indulgent.

Convinced that his word would have no weight in the council when the affairs of his kingdom were discussed, he signed, blindly, a quantity of edicts, each more absurd and more tyrannical than the other. In the smallest questions the will of the ministers was more powerful than his.

A man called Boiscaillau, surgeon of his armies, had reached him with a statement in which he asked, with

justice, for the payment of some money which was due to him from former times. The king, surprised that it had not been paid, put with his own hand at the foot of the statement: "My comptroller-general will pay within one month, the amount of the above mentioned statement to Boiscaillau, to whom it is really due, and who has need of it."

The surgeon, provided with this order, hastened to the comptroller-general, and succeeded after much trouble in seeing Abbot Terrai. He presented his note to him, countersigned with the hand of the master. The abbot looked at it, and threw it back to him. "But, monseigneur, when shall I be paid?" "Never." "But the signature of the king?" "It is not mine." "But the majesty of the king." "He may pay you, since you have addressed yourself to him. Leave here! I have not the time to be troubled any longer."

This man, petrified, no longer knew what to do. He addressed himself to the captain of the guard, who put him off; he went to the Marshal de Richelieu. Not being able to see him, he begged his secretary to speak for him, and to have the marshal give a new statement to the king; he showed him the former one upon which his majesty had written. This secretary, still a novice with the nobility, believing that a word of the king should be equivalent to an absolute order, promised De Boiscaillau to arrange the affair. He saw the marshal, and told him that the Abbot Terrai had just done a thing, which, if it were known by the king, would expose him to the greatest trouble; then he related to him what had occurred.

Richelieu laughed in his face, and said: "You are a great fool not to know yet that the worst protection is that of the king. Since the abbé has spoken, tell Boiscaillau that he will not get anything, and do not mix yourself up any more with such business."

CHAPTER LXXXIII.

Louis XV. dies of a complication of three diseases.—Intrigues to prevent his confession.—A fearful illness takes him away.—The people are satisfied.—His epitaph.—Mme. du Barry's judgment about the reign of Louis XVI.

NOBODY ever feared death more than the religious Louis XV., and none of those whom the theologians called "old sinners," or impenitents, ever looked at death with more terror. The priests wished to convert him and send away Mme. du Barry. They had so well fostered this terror that the Abbé de Bauvis in preaching the holy scene at the court had told him to his face: "Still forty days, sire, and Nineveh will be destroyed." The king, who was frightened half to death, said to the Marshal de Richelieu: "I will be quiet only when the forty days have passed." He died precisely on the the fortieth day. The almanac of Liege had predicted that in the month of April of this year one of the most favored ladies would play her last rôle, and Mme. du Barry was never tired of saying: "I, also, would like to have this bad month of April passed."

Since this threat of the preacher and of the almanac, several events happened which increased still further the terror of Louis; Sorba, ambassador of Genoa, whom he saw frequently, was struck by sudden death; the Marquis de Chauvelin, a companion of his pleasures, fell to his feet while playing with him; the Marshal d'Armentières was struck by the same death; the Abbé de la Ville, while at

Marquis de Chauvelin

his levee to thank him for the place of director of foreign affairs, was stricken with apoplexy in his presence, and died a short time afterward by a second attack. Finally, while on a hunt in the forest of Compiègne, a bolt of lightning struck near the king.

This prince hardly ever pitied those of his acquaintances who died after a confession, but he regretted very much when they died without the assistance of a priest, the Cardinal de Fleury, having brought him up in all the principles of the Christian faith. In order to free the king from his apprehension the Du Barrys, their friends, and his companions of pleasure, engaged him to go to divert himself at the Trianon, where they had prepared orgies of a new kind. The king went there, and was attacked by the illness, of which he died a few days afterwards in Versailles, whither they had transported him. For a long time he had had a secret illness, which was attributed to his libertinism. A young country woman who had the beginning of smallpox, and who had been engaged for his pleasures at the Trianon, gave it to him; and Louis found himself attacked with smallpox and at the same time with a sickness of which we do not care to mention the name.

The 29th, the first eruption was observed on him; an ugly fever manifested itself, and the three maladies combined. The Archbishop of Paris hastened to him the following day; but Mme. du Barry, getting frightened, disappeared from his apartments. The Bishop of Senlis, the Marshal de Richelieu, the Duke d'Aumont, and Mme. Adelaide, having opposed themselves to the

entrance of this prelate, obtained from him the promise that he would not speak to the king about sacraments. The king would not listen to him, so that Mme. du Barry appeared once more to delay, if it were possible, their administration, which might be followed by a general dismissal of them all.

However, the illness went from bad to worse, and its symptoms became still more frightful. Tormented by the fear of losing his mistress and by the desire of reconciling himself with God, Louis called back Mme. du Barry and then had her sent away again. He spoke one moment about the supreme moment and the next when Mme. du Barry reappeared he fondled her still. The Archbishop of Paris, ashamed of his first defeat, returned again to Versailles to influence the king to confess, and taking residence with the lazarist priests, watched for the favorable moment; while the king begged Mme. d'Aiguillon to conduct without noise Mme. du Barry to her house, to avoid, he said, the scenes of Metz, which he had never forgotten. The favorite did not offer any resistance. She was easy, giddy, good-natured, amiable, light and handsome as love itself. She asked nothing better in 1768 than to be with Louis; and she did not abuse her power over much; she was not such a scourge as the mischievous women who had preceded her.

Mme. du Barry had hardly withdrawn when the king asked for her again; she was refused to him; he had then fallen into the hands of the priests, who had no other purpose than to prevent an old son of the church

from dying without confession. Louis asked again several times for Mme. du Barry. "She has gone," they said to him. "Ah! she has gone, I then must leave. Let them at least pray at Sainte-Geneviève." La Vrillière wrote to the parliament which, considering the dangers of the country at that time, had the right to open or close the old relic at their pleasure.

The shrine was therefore opened, but the people kept their word to the king, and the memoirs of the priests of the archbishopric observe truthfully that the people prayed very weakly and without much emphasis. During his illness at Metz, on the contrary, they seemed to have been upset; the churches were full day and night, and all of them resounded with the vows of the people who still loved their king in 1744. The remark of the Abbé Sainte-Geneviève, the day following after the death of Louis, was not forgotten. When they joked with him about the powerlessness of the shrine, he said: "What do you complain of? Did he not die?"

The illness of the king, however, became worse at every moment, and it was necessary that he should make his confession. The more Richelieu and Fronsac opposed themselves to the administration of the Holy Eucharist and of the oil, the more the prelate of Paris and the bigots increased their efforts. The Duke de Fronsac threatened the priest of Versailles that he would throw him out of the window, if he should speak about confession to the king. "If you do not kill me," answered him the priest, "I shall come back by the door, because this is my right."

The following day, on the 7th of May, the king himself offered to confess. Nobody answering his demand, he asked half an hour afterwards whether his confessor had arrived. One hour later he asked whether he was there; then the Duke of Duras sent for him; the king tried still to avoid this step, but Lamartinière, his first surgeon, said to him: "Sire, I have seen your majesty in very interesting circumstances; I have never admired you more than this day. If your majesty believes what I say to you, you should finish to-day what you have so well begun." The king called back the Abbé Maudoux, and believed himself absolved by means of four words, after a shameful reign which soiled our history during fifty years.

Having received absolution, the sick king found himself easier. The royal family went to receive, at the foot of the staircase, the holy sacrament which was brought to them. The great chaplain approached the king, received his orders, and said to those present: "Though your majesty owes nobody any account, you gave me orders to declare that you are repentful of the bad example which you have given to your people. If the Lord prolongs your days you will employ them to alleviate those evils."

Louis XIII., at his death, had used the same language, and Louis XIV. also repented. Louis XV. had confessed everything in 1744; he confessed everything in 1774. "See," he said to the Bishop de Senlis, "having received the Host, see that by misfortune it does not mix itself with the matter of my sores."

The young dauphin, educated by the Jesuits, separated from his grandfather, because he had not had the small-pox, was very much frightened. He wrote to Terray: "Monsieur le controleur-general:—I beg you to have distributed to the poor of the parishes of Paris two hundred thousand livres, in order to have them pray for the king. If you find that that is too much, retain the sum from the pensions belonging to Mme. la Dauphine and myself." (Signed), LOUIS-AUGUSTE.

The daughters of the king rendered to their father the service of a paid guard; they never had had the small-pox; they sacrificed themselves.

The 9th of May the symptoms were still more fearful, the malady made ravages to such an extent that they cannot be described. The fever hastened a general mortification. They had opened the relic of Sainte-Geneviève, and new orders arrived to have the shrine let down. Beaumont and his clergy went on foot to kiss it in the church, after having disputed for two hours whether it would be appropriate to go there in black or in violet dress. The king demanded, in the meanwhile, the holy balm, otherwise called extreme unction, and energetically made all the responses. His remorse increased at the same time. Maudoux was obliged to appear every moment. The king was confessed twenty times during this last illness.

Death was expected at every moment, and nothing can describe the infection of the apartments of the king. Valets fell suddenly down and died. His daughters alone had humanity and courage. General mortification

set in; his legs fell into pieces, and the patient died the 10th of May, 1774. They had to inclose the corpse at once in a lead coffin, and to call for this dangerous office the cesspool cleaners of Versailles, and in order not to spread the plague to inclose the leaden coffin in a box of wood filled with bran and aromatics. A second box, protected in the same way, to cover the whole, was ordered, since nothing could neutralize the horrible stench. So died Louis XV., King of France.

The people of Paris, all the French people, delivered from Louis XV., enjoyed the day of the 10th of May, 1774. Thousands of verses, pasquinades, epitaphs and songs against him were then composed. The following epitaph has been preserved, because it says better than any of the others what was Louis XV:—

> Remplissant ses honteaux destins,
> Louis a fini carrière.
> Pleurez, coquins; pleurez, paraeque
> Vous avez perdu votre père.

The priests and the women were in general more favorable to the memory of the king than the rest of the Frenchmen; the women, because he always had loved them, and the priests because, notwithstanding his vices, they had always seen him submissive and a believer. And the policy of the church is to pardon everything, provided one believes. With regard to his ministers the Duke de Choiseul, whom he had loaded with kindness, wrote horrible stories about him in his Memoirs, and even theatricals of bad taste, which are found in the second volume of his printed Memoirs.

The magistracy of the kingdom, that he had exiled, had no occasion to bless his memory. Bretagne had struggled during his whole reign against his despotism and Languedoc remembered always that he had dissolved the legislature of the province.

Among the literary men, some writers and poets were perhaps indifferent; but the philosophers, who despised him, in forgiving him, could not forget that they were persecuted by him and deprived of their liberty.

The City of Paris was in general so disgusted with the reign of the king that for several years the prince had avoided showing himself there. The whole of France, that still loved the government of the kings and the House of Bourbon, felt itself dishonored in having been obliged to submit for so long a time to such a master.

All the years of the reign of Louis XV. were not as despicable as those which immediately preceded his death. This prince governed well or ill according to his ministers. As long as he was dominated by Fleury, or by Mme. de Chateauroux, who had a lofty mind, courage and insight, France was well governed. After the death of Mme. de Chateauroux affairs went always from bad to worse. Philosophy alone progressed without ever going backwards and without being stopped by any circumstances; the obstacles which were opposed to it by the court and the priests rendered it only the more audacious and interesting. Its sway was, it is true, only speculative at that time, but it became active in the following generation.

Louis, who detested it, favored science, art and

literature. To his reign are due those splendid roads which lead to the capitol, the canals, an increase of industry and trade, special progress in surgery, the edicts concerning substitutions, testaments, mortgages, suitable allowances, but no progress in the matter of liberty. It was reserved for those whom he called his people and his subjects, to attain freedom under the reign of his grandson by revolution. The king refused even, towards the end of his days when he had become softened and his views somewhat changed, to give the protestants any law of tolerance, though he had made several laws at the beginning of his reign which were worthy of Louvois, le Tellier and the reign of Louis XIV., laws, which he refused to cancel afterwards. Instead of adopting the ideas of his century, the king constantly opposed them. Throughout his reign he maintained all the inflexibility of a devotee.

Richelieu was thunderstruck when he heard of the return of M. de Maurepas. He knew this old secretary of state and had neither esteem nor love for him; he was furious that unexpected circumstances had replaced him; and assured his friends that he would be no better as prime minister than he had been as minister of the marine.

M. de Maurepas, while very young, had obtained this place from the regent who wished to recognize in him what he owed to the Chancellor de Pontchartrain, his uncle, who had secretly informed him of the testament of Louis XIV. Richelieu said that M. de Maurepas, instead of applying himself to the performance of his duties, had

only tried to appear as a wit; that he had spent millions without placing the marine upon a suitable footing; that he was superficial, irrational, ready to laugh at everything, and that they would soon repent the favor they had bestowed upon him. However, the marshal hastened to compliment the new minister upon his happy return.

Richelieu, who added himself to the number of courtiers of M. de Maurepas, believed that he should show himself, also, to the new king; he did not see the king; neither was he rejected. The queen received him even more coolly. Nevertheless he hastened to Versailles.

After some unsuccessful attempts to see the king, Richelieu made up his mind to leave for Bordeaux. All his friends were convinced that he would not survive his humiliation and that the death of Louis XV. would hasten his own; they thought him already stricken and believed this year to be his last. But the marshal soon allayed their fears. He was seen to be as calm and as quiet as before. He occupied himself with the new theatre that he had constructed at Bordeaux; it was learned with surprise that he gave great suppers where handsome women came to console him. Girls, theatricals, everything distracted him; he gave more attention than ever to all these. He spoke of the death of his former master as a natural event and the regrets which it caused him did not stop him from indulging himself in all pleasures which came in his way.

This conduct was in conformity with his principles of egotism, as he himself acknowledged in a paper which he left concerning the adventures of his youth.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

Trial of Mme. de Saint-Vincent; details concerning the affair.—The commandment of Guienne is taken away from the marshal, and the king does not wish him to go to his governorship unless the Marshal de Mochi be there also.—Richelieu writes to the king.—Re-establishment of the parliaments.—Judgment in the trial of the marshal.—The story of "Colin."

WHILE M. de Richelieu resumed in his government his former habits and, being far from the court, thought only of how to amuse himself, a woman-intriguer prepared for him trouble of a singular kind in Paris. Mme. de Saint-Vincent, of whom we have already spoken, being put in a convent by her husband, and being transferred from one place to another, and finally to a convent at Poitiers, had given circulation in Paris to a hundred thousand écus of notes signed by the marshal.

Many of these had been discounted and Rubis, a dealer in old clothes, presented one to the intendant of the marshal for payment. Since he had no knowledge of the debt, he refused to pay it until he had written about it to his master. In the meantime there came to the intendant still another man who presented a note asking if it would be paid. A third, a fourth, all unknown, came also, presented notes and made the same inquiry. This business manager of the marshal, being frightened at the multitude of these debts, wrote again to M. de Richelieu to tell him what was going on.

Richelieu answered that all the people who had presented themselves were scoundrels, that they should all be put into a dungeon, and that he would come to Paris for the purpose of punishing them.

He arrived, indeed, and never returned to Bordeaux. Instead of simply saying that he had not signed any notes, that those which were presented were forgeries, having the public prosecuter look for the authors of the forgeries, the marshal, ill advised by his business agent, who had his own interest in entangling this affair, trusted too much to him and insisted upon getting at the source of the notes, issued under his name. Immediately the police discovered that Mme. de Saint-Vincent was the first agent of their circulation. She was summoned, and Richelieu obtained an order of arrest against the accused woman and a man, called Cauron, who had been under secretary of the duke, and lived with Mme. de Saint-Vincent. They were conducted to For-l'Evêque. The police, being always sold to the powerful, though Richelieu did not enjoy any longer his old influence, thought it well to refuse nothing to a Marshal of France, so all those who were pointed out by him were imprisoned.

Vebel, Benevent, Abbé de Trans and others were arrested or decreed to be personally liable. Richelieu had to find guilty ones, and he conducted himself in this affair with the same precipitation as on many other occasions.

After this beginning, it was necessary to prove the crime of forgery, of which he accused Mme. de Saint-

Vincent. This necessity was very difficult to fulfil; when one forges a signature he does not generally provide witnesses to the crime. It was no easier to prove that the accused were accomplices of Mme. de Saint-Vincent, and necessarily, this trial became very long. The public, with whom Richelieu had for a long time been growing unpopular, did not fail to take the part of the unfortunate woman, whom the influence of the marshal left languishing in prison. The family of the woman, being exasperated by the treatment to which she was submitted, took up her side in the affair, and Richelieu appeared everywhere to be wrong.

To this day there are people who are convinced that the marshal himself was the author of the notes, and that he was discharged of the responsibility by favoritism. We have promised to tell the truth, and certainly our pen will not be soiled by a lie in order to honor the memory of a man, of whom we relate indiscriminately the vices and the good qualities; we are not related to him and our testimony cannot be suspected. We have no other purpose, no other interest, than to relate exactly the facts.

When the Marshal de Richelieu received the first letters of Mme. de Saint-Vincent, she was in the convent, where her husband had her put on account of bad conduct; he only saw her a long time afterwards, and by her demand. Having heard of his arrival in the city where she dwelled, she had begged of him to make her a visit; this visit was very short. Mme. de Saint-Vincent was then neither fresh nor very young.

She wrote to M. de Richelieu, who answered her several times; finally he obtained for her permission to go to the convent of Poitiers. It was in this city that accident made her acquainted with De Vedel, a major of infantry, to whom she talked much and boastingly about her intimacy with M. de Richelieu. Knowing that the marshal had to pass through Poitiers to go to Bordeaux, she expressed a great desire to have him come to see her. Richelieu, who was easy with women, accepted her invitation. Being alone with her and without desire to obtain any favor, he was almost compelled to give way to her advances. He compared her jestingly with Mme. Bouvillon in the "Roman comique," who wished to seduce her dear l'Etiole. The result of the conversation was that she spoke of her great distress, and Richelieu gave her twelve louis.

The marshal maintained that it was the first and the last time that he had been honored by her favors, and twenty times he had reproached to himself for his weakness with a woman who had nothing in her to please him. From this time she believed herself authorized to write him oftener, and the marshal, pestered with letters, sent her from time to time some help.

It is probable that she did not find it sufficient to satisfy the cupidity of her lover, for whom she was crazy, and who was staying with her rather for the useful than the agreeable. Vedel certainly played in this whole affair a very bad part; either he took part in the forgeries of Mme. Saint-Vincent, or he persuaded her to take advantage of the influence which she said she had over

the mind of M. de Richelieu. At least, he received money continually for the attention which he paid her.

Finally this woman had recourse to imitating handwriting through a pane of glass; she had already done this at Milhaud, where she forged a letter of a doctor, but she treated this attempt at forgery as a mere joke. She had in the letters of the marshal plenty of signatures, and she traced from these letters the words which were necessary to put together a note of one hundred thousand écus.

Soon the death of Louis XV. enabled her to realize her project. She believed that the marshal had been left without friends, and that he would sacrifice money to avoid the unpleasantness of an affair that would injure him before the public. We have forgotten to say that being unable to dispose of a note of one hundred thousand écus, she had made several notes, which, taken together, formed even more than that sum. She waited until the marshal was in Bordeaux to discount the notes, which was done with much loss, as is usual, though M. de Richelieu's financial standing was good.

This is the true story of the affair, which may seem singular, but we defy the most incredulous to refuse the proofs which we shall give, concerning the forgery. We ourselves have had a prejudice against the marshal, and only by investigating the facts, have we arrived at the truth.

In the first place, it is not true, as has been said, that M. de Richelieu had procured Mme. de Saint-Vincent for the king, who had given a hundred thousand écus to

the marshal to pay for her complaisance, and that the latter had kept them for himself. Mme. de Saint-Vincent was neither young nor handsome when she came to Paris; so this imputation falls down by itself, and without going into long details.

It is also foolish to advance the idea that Richelieu, in order to obtain her good graces, had given her that sum. Those who believed this, we repeat it, did not know the marshal; he was very far from being liberal, and he was not in sufficient need of women to pay them so high. He had plenty of very handsome ones, and there is not known one single act of generosity in respect to them. Mme. Rousse is the only one to whom he had given a hundred thousand francs, and that was when he married Mme. de Rothe; but he had lived a very long time with her; she was his regular mistress, and further than that, this grant was paid only after his death.

Then, again, it was decided by experts that the notes were traced, because, in placing them one upon the other, the same distances were seen between the several letters of the signature; the same stroke, the same position of the dots; it has been demonstrated that it is physically impossible to sign one's own name several times without there being some difference, be it even the slightest, in the spaces between the letters, or in some other characteristics of the signature. But in the notes attributed to Richelieu the signatures were in every respect exactly identical.

Mme. de Saint-Vincent showed a note of one hundred thousand écus to several persons, who said that she

could not get rid of it, if it were not accepted by his banker. She knew Peixotto was the marshal's banker, and soon his name appeared also upon the note.

Being questioned concerning the genuineness of the signature of this banker, she admitted that she had blotted it. But who in the world would amuse himself by making a blot upon a note of one hundred thousand écus.

She then divided up this note into several smaller ones, and since it was easy for her to increase the liberality of the marshal, she made three, amounting together to the sum of four hundred and twenty thousand livres. The deposition of the witnesses showed that she then was still in possession of the original note.

Even if it be possible to believe that the marshal had increased his gift by one hundred and twenty thousand livres, can one reasonably think that he would be foolish enough to leave in the hands of his creditor the original note, with such a considerable addition besides?

Mme. de Saint-Vincent changed anew the note into ten notes of thirty thousand livres each, amongst which there were found some dated May 8th, while she maintained, herself, that the undivided note was made in March or April. Then she had them discounted with great loss, and, through a false letter of M. de Richelieu, she informed her agents at the same time about new notes which he had promised to sign. Some reason had to be given for such liberalities, so Mme. de Saint-Vincent gave them to understand that some very peculiar things had transpired in her first interview with M. de

Richelieu; and, since it was difficult to attach such a great value to an adventure so giddily decided, she admitted that, as a result of it, she had become enceinte. Not satisfied with this story, she manufactured a letter from the marshal admitting that he was the father of the child in question, and engaging himself never to abandon the mother, nor the precious bond of their tenderness.

She had this letter read to many persons, believing that in giving to these notes such an origin, she would insure them more authenticity. Unfortunately for her the date of this supposed letter was not in accordance with her story. In her interrogatory she took great pains to withdraw the letter from the judges, and to say that it was the play of her imagination, that she had never had a child, and that this lie had only been employed to draw money from M. de Richelieu.

When she was first arrested, her despair, the attempts that she made to kill herself, her repeated exclamation, "I am lost!" did not evidence innocence; all her acts pointed to guilt.

All of these facts appear in the answers of Mme. de Saint-Vincent. Her avowals even are proofs of what we have advanced. Now I ask the greatest enemy of M. de Richelieu, if the owner of a note for such a big amount would amuse himself by putting upon it a forged acceptance. It was Cauron under-secretary of the marshal who had been discharged by him, who forged this acceptance, because he knew very well the handwriting of Peixotto.

I ask a man inclined to believe Richelieu guilty, if a

woman, admitting that she imitated the writing of the marshal in order to amuse herself, may not reasonably be accused of having forged the signature of the note, when everything goes to prove that it was a forgery? The report of the experts, the proofs above given, everything shows, as clear as the day, that Richelieu never was the author of the notes, which caused this astonishing affair. It became thus complicated, because the marshal, accustomed to act like a despot, had thrown into prison several private people, against whom he had hardly any evidence. We have already said that the manner in which this trial was begun was irrational and very superficial.

While we oppose ourselves to public opinion, by defending the marshal, we shall also show our love for truth. We shall accuse him of a much more odious action, in our opinion, than that of denying his signature, if really he had made the note of Mme. de Saint-Vincent.

He had given the position of janitor of his pavilion of the Boulevard to a man, Colin, who had been valet of M. de Seignelay. This man had a recognized reputation for honesty. Unfortunately for him, he went away a moment while there was work done on this pavilion, allowing time enough for one of the workingmen to take two very handsome vases of porcelain, garnished with gold, which had been given to the marshal, by Mme. de Lauraguais, who had just died.

This unfortunate man discovered the robbery, which had been committed, and led by the people of the house, who gave testimony as to his innocence, he

threw himself at the feet of the marshal, to whom he gave information about the loss of the vases. This latter, furious, accustomed to disbelieve in honesty, claimed that Colin was the robber, and immediately wrote to the police-lieutenant to have him arrested.

Colin was led the very same evening to the Chatelet, where the marshal promptly began his trial. The unfortunate man, from the depths of his prison, protested his innocence, and as he could not be convicted of theft, the judgment remained suspended. Deprived of all assistance, he was obliged to sell everything that he possessed to mitigate this misfortune, and soon was left to misery and despair.

Eight months after his incarceration, there was arrested at a jeweler's a lattice-maker, who came there to sell a considerable amount of gold, upon which there still remained, notwithstanding all the pains which had been taken to destroy it, traces of the arms of the marshal. He was led to a police captain and admitted that, working in the palace of Richelieu, he had taken advantage of the absence of the janitor, and had taken the vases, and buried them in a corner of the garden. Being conducted to the palace by the justice the two vases were found again in the garden at the very spot, which he had indicated. Nothing could prove better the innocence of Colin.

The marshal did not, however, take one step to set him free, but when the unfortunate man presented himself at his house, he did not even wish to see him, finding it beneath him to make good the wrong that he had

done. Colin carried on a conversation with him through his *valet-de-chambre* and told about the state in which he was; that he was in want of everything; the marshal sent him an answer that he would have him put in the Asylum of Bicêtre if he continued to importune him further.

This unluckiest of men, deprived of all resources, at a loss to get a situation, was reduced to accept the position of errand man in a lodging-house. At last he had occasion to carry letters to a certain woman; she learned that he had been in the service of the Marshal de Richelieu and hastened to ask him, whether he did not know any adventures of his former master. Colin, who was, of course, entirely taken up by his own adventure, related his story to the lady, who was very indignant on account of it. She was intelligent; she took an interest in the unfortunate man, and when the affair of Mme. de Saint-Vincent came out, she wanted Colin to enter a complaint against the marshal, to sue him for damages. Colin dared not attempt it himself; the woman reassured him, and said that she had an excellent lawyer to follow up such an affair, that he need not trouble himself about anything, that she would pay all the expenses herself, and that she desired only one thing, and that was that the old marshal be known for what he really was.

Richelieu was summoned. His business manager carried a bribe to the procureur to keep him from prosecuting, but, guided by this generous woman, whom indignation had made implacable, he said that it was not for him to decide. Finally the marshal, who feared public

opinion, offered to give three hundred livres of life income to Colin, who, rather than run the risk of a trial, accepted it at once, and promised to keep quiet.

However, in the midst of all these incidents the marshal remained calm. He saw his trial going on well; sure of his innocence, and of the favor that he was to find amongst the members of the new parliament, he waited for judgment without any anxiety to trouble his pleasures.

His son, who then seemed to be on better terms with him, wished to celebrate his reconciliation by giving his father a fête at Gennevilliers, of which we have already spoken, which he had bought from the Duke de Choiseul, when he was in disgrace.

The tastes of the father and of the son were about the same. They needed a great many gay beauties to animate their repasts. Mlle. Raucourt and Virginie, of the Opera, were chosen to be goddesses of this fête. The marshal, who was seventy-eight years old, felt as young on that day as when he was twenty-five; he danced, played a thousand games with these divinities, and, as work was going on at this pavilion, which he had had constructed formerly, he wished to admire the improvements together with Mlle. Raucourt. She was not any longer that severely virtuous woman whom her father escorted with pistols in his pockets; she had become entirely emancipated.

The marshal hastened to the pavilion; the actress had a hard time to follow him. They remained together more than half an hour in contemplation, and Mlle. Raucourt admitted on her return that the most astonishing thing she had seen was the marshal himself.

Delighted by this admission of a woman who should be well qualified to judge, Richelieu became still gayer, and wished earnestly that Mlle. de Virginie should come with him and make the same promenade. Only after earnest solicitations was he willing to put off this pilgrimage to another day.

It is said that the Duke de Fronsac, while seeming amused at the follies of his father, reflected that with a man as strong as he, his inheritance was still far off.

After these dissipations there followed new humiliations for the marshal. M. Berlin said to him, by order of the king, that he should not have his governorship any more, unless the Marshal de Mouchi was there also; this officer having been named to the command, which Richelieu had held for some time. He protested immediately to the king, but his protest had no effect.

He believed, at least, that he would be more fortunate in his trial; he was on the point of being judged, when he learned that the king was re-establishing the suppressed parliament. First he raved against M. de Maurepas, whom he regarded as the author of this plan. He asserted that it was only the desire of making them subordinate to himself which could have determined the king to take such an inconsiderate step, and that it would turn to his disadvantage as well as to that of the nation.

It was, however, necessary to submit. Richelieu, notwithstanding his antipathy against the parliament, constantly visited his new judges. Nearly every day he stepped into his carriage at six o'clock in the morning in order to solicit them. He succeeded in being favorably considered by several, but was obliged to endure unkind

remarks from the others. One day a councilor told him clearly that he would bring judgment against him, and that no one owed any consideration to a man who had carried bribery into the sanctuary of the laws. Richelieu answered him quietly: "You speak so in this moment, sir, but you are too just not to act differently when you are in the palace."

Nobody is ignorant of the debates of the parliament in this affair, and its personal animosity against the marshal; this went to such a point that in a session the Prince de Conti, now deceased, who by no means loved Richelieu, was obliged to say, "Gentlemen, we are not gathered here to find faults in M. de Richelieu, but to judge whether the notes of Mme. de Saint-Vincent are genuine or false, and I declare that I denounce all those who deviate from this the only point of the business at issue."

We only quote these facts to put in evidence that the marshal was not treated with indulgence by the parliament, that, on the contrary, this company humiliated him on every possible occasion.

The notes, evidently false, were declared so, and Mme. de Saint-Vincent was condemned to repay those which had been discounted. She did not get any damages nor interest, though she had been put into prison by the influence of the marshal; she was even condemned to pay costs, and this proves well that the parliament saw in her the author of these forgeries. The order of the court enjoined Vedel and Benevent to be more careful in the future, and condemned the marshal to pay the expenses of the case against them, a curious kind of con-

tradiction; but there followed a still greater one. The order convicted Cauron of forging the acceptance of Peixotto and, enjoined him to be more careful in the future, and not to change any more notes by forged signatures, but it condemned the marshal for damages and interest and to pay costs in the suit.

If he were guilty, why did they accord him these damages and interest? It was recompensing a man for having committed a forgery.

The other accused were acquitted; the marshal was also condemned in their respect to damages and interest, and to the cost. Nothing was more just; he had had them imprisoned, without being able to prove that they were accomplices of Mme. de Saint-Vincent.

Permission was given to print fifty copies of the judgment, of which ten should be posted; the whole at the expense of the marshal. It is clear, that he only won that which he could not lose. It is true that it was the essential thing for him that the notes were declared forgeries; but he lost as much as if he had paid the hundred thousand écus. The expenses, for the hunting up of witnesses, whom he had brought from great distances, were excessive; damages and interest were not spared; the addition of the costs amounted to very much; so that if Mme. de Saint-Vincent would have promised him not to offend again, in the beginning, he would have done much better to pay the notes of this woman-forger, since he would have saved for himself three years of troubles and anxieties and would not have afforded amusement for a public which did not incline in his favor.

CHAPTER LXXXV.

Richelieu succeeds in making some friends at court, he is seen with more favor by the king and limits his ambition to managing the Comédie Italienne; details of his pleasures.—He sees Voltaire again in Paris.—He marries for the third time and takes Mme. de Rothe for his wife.—The event which determined this marriage.

THE Marshal de Richelieu saw that he was not fit for the new court, but had not courage enough not to appear in it. His experience showed that one succeeds often by being obtrusive, and he hoped, in braving unpleasantness, to put a stop to it. Though he was persuaded that he was not well judged in the mind of the king he, however, went to make his honors without caring about the reception that he received. He went to see the ministers; he showed them so much attachment, such great consideration, he was so clever with them, that he was admitted gradually to their intimacy. M. de Maurepas himself ceased to see an enemy, in an old man, still amiable, who tried to inform him about everything; the queen looked at him less severely, and the king got accustomed by degrees to seeing him.

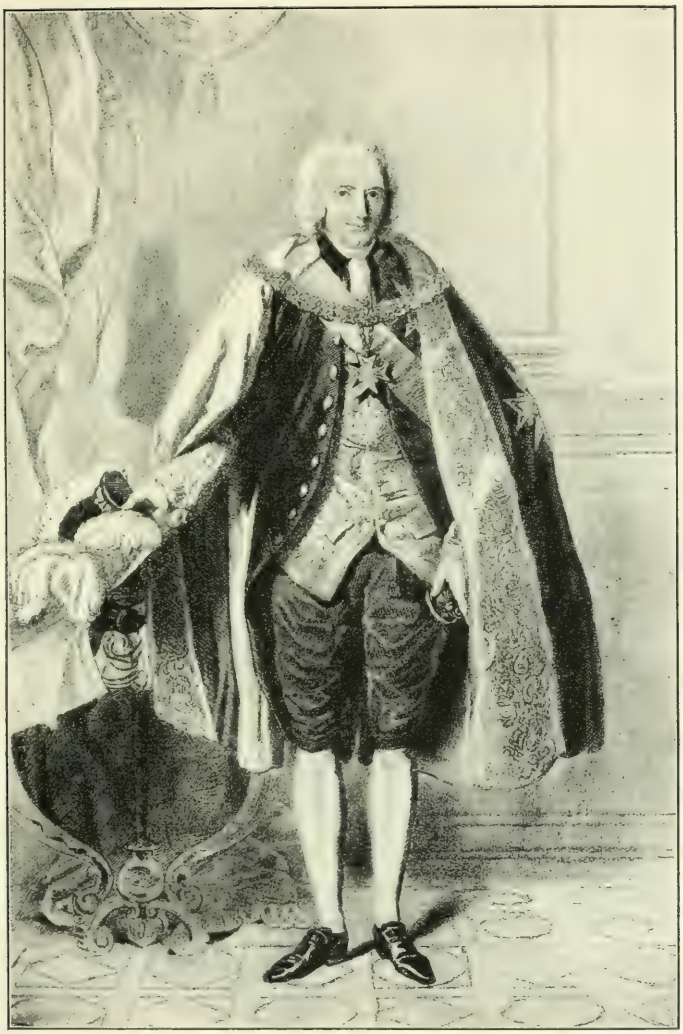
The marshal, satisfied with his first success, devoted himself with much more pleasure to details of the drama, which always had amused him much. Deprived of going into his governorship or taking part in the intrigues of the court, which became to him nearly foreign, he soon had no occupation, except the "Comédie Italienne." He

must command somewhere, and he became a despot with the actors. His political correspondence with his daughter, Mme. d'Egmont, had ceased in the year 1773 by the death of this charming woman, who possessed the amiable qualities of her father without having his vices, and who was regretted by all who knew her. Mme. de Mauconseil, notwithstanding her taste for intrigue, had no influence in the court; she was reduced, as was her former lover, to intrigue in the theatre, and neither of them wasted their time. The marshal, having won his trial, found more time to give to his pleasures. He was not affected any longer by the insulting and defamatory songs which had been spread against him, songs in which he was dragged in the mud in all kinds of ways. But if, on the one hand, he was treated with much harshness, he had, on the other, the consolation of seeing that in England more justice was rendered to him. The marshal, who was accustomed to look on the best side in all circumstances, saw only the eulogies that he really deserved, and forgot quick enough the insults and satires.

His faculties seemed always the same, and the divinities, looking at this old man, attempting to renew his youth, were much astonished to discover that he needed not the aid of their charms. All the débutantes were instructed of the sacrifice which he demanded; so that the marshal was occupied nearly every morning with giving and receiving.

Though Mme. Rousse was his recognized mistress, he was not impeded by that from adding to her a multitude of women of all kinds. Sometimes in the evening when,

The Duc de Richelieu



he was not busy, he put on a common coat, and went out on foot by his pavilion of the boulevard to make visits to those street-walking beauties, who are so often met in Paris. At other times, he had them come to his house, and the lackies were surprised to see coming out from monseigneur's women, who, the evening before, had not seemed worthy of their attention. One evening, after one of these nightly promenades, the valet-de-chambre, who was on guard, saw him put his sword under his coat, and again take the same road to the boulevard. Since it was dangerous to question him, or to follow him, he waited for his return with anxiety. Probably he had had some quarrel, but it was never known how it ended, for he came back quietly without giving any sign of what had happened.

These giddy acts must not surprise us; he had said twenty times during the course of his trial with Mme. de Saint-Vincent, when the family of this latter had circulated such fearful stories against him, that he would prefer a hundred times that that Provençale woman should choose a champion of her family in order to end with him their troubles upon the field. And though he was seventy-eight years old, he was confident and brave enough to fight with a young man.

Notwithstanding his taste for change, a taste which went on increasing with age, Mlle. Colombe, the elder, seemed to be the woman whom he distinguished most. Whenever this actress was desired by the public or her comrades (which was not a rare occurrence) he answered to the complaints that were made to him: "What do

you want to tell her? That she is handsome?" He had a scandalous diary of all that happened to the actresses, and amused himself very much with the tricks that they played on their lovers. When he heard that some of these had been imposed upon, he said very wittily that it was necessary; that the priest must live by the altar.

One day he met at his house a débutante of the Theatre Francais. She had talent, but spoke with a little difficulty and was small, which made the marshal say that her tongue was too long and her legs too short. Notwithstanding these faults the public seemed very much pleased with her. M. de Richelieu in paying her his compliments had something to say about her manner of elocution; she was simple and monseigneur loved a little emphasis. He assured her that good taste in tragedy was lost; that Mlle. Lecouvreur did not play as the actresses of his own time, that it was necessary to make one feel each verse; and he declared that he would give her a lesson, himself.

He then went to declaiming the rôle of Emilie, in the tragedy of Cinna. The marshal had a high head-voice, so that, in reciting, his voice produced sharp and discordant sounds. He gesticulated to give warmth to his declamation; he multiplied his gestures which, in order to reproduce the pantomime scene, he accompanied with grimaces and contortions still more ridiculous. He was, however, pleased with his own elocution, and told the actress to observe him well; that that was the way to recite the verses of Baron, of Dufrêne, Lecouv-

reur and Champmelé; that that was talent. The unfortunate débutante was upon thorns; she nearly burst out with laughter and bit her lips to resist the temptation. Fortunately her lesson came to an end and M. de Richelieu believed that there was due him a double salary, first as gentleman of the chamber and second as master of declamation.

He did not miss going to the comedy the first day that this actress was announced; he went into her box after the representation, assured her that she had made progress, that she had well profited by his advice, and that he wished he had the time to give her lessons oftener. We have this anecdote from the actress herself.

If wrinkles increased upon the face of the marshal he did not, however, lose his amiability toward women; none approached him who were not carried away by his gallantry and his agreeable repartees.

The wife of the councilor of the parliament of Rouen came to see Paris and of all the curiosities that she hoped to see, the Marshal de Richelieu, of whom she had heard so very much, tempted her the most. It was not difficult to show her in the theatre this illustrious man. "What," said she, "is it this doll, this wrinkled countenance, the one which makes gossip among the women and make them run after it! My God! One of my desires has quickly left me!"

However, if her hero gave her such an unfavorable impression, she was assured that his palace, which contained a thousand precious things, would be more agreeable to her. The day was settled, and a person, who

knew the secretary, undertook to conduct her there with a lady friend.

They were led into the highest apartments of which the magnificence astonished them. Having descended into that of the marshal, who had just gone out, they admired at their leisure the beauties which it contained, but on entering into a large cabinet, near the library, the first object which they saw was the marshal himself, who had come back by a secret door without being observed. The ladies retired; the marshal followed, telling them: "I see, ladies, that you were guided only by the curiosity of seeing my rooms; I had hoped that another motive conducted you here. I trouble you, I retire; I never put an obstacle in the way of beauty. Be free at my home, examine all; I will depart." At the same time he opened a garden-gate and disappeared with the celerity of a young man.

"Indeed he is still charming," cried out the stranger. "I see that he could have upset many heads; when he speaks it is not noticed that he is old."

Another time he paid a visit to a marchioness, at whose house he had not been before. His messenger made a mistake and announced him at another woman's house whose apartments were opposite that of the marchioness. On entering, the marshal saw that a mistake had been made. He saluted the woman with grace, and said to her: "I beg your pardon, madame, for the foolishness of my servant. I was going to see a handsome woman, and he only made a mistake in the name. Accept my excuses on account of my sudden visit, and

at the same time believe that I shall never forget in my life that I owe thanks to the error that has procured me such an agreeable sight." He went on in this strain, and left the woman very much surprised to see an old man so gallant. She had detested M. de Richelieu on account of his trial, but we are witnesses that from that moment she radically changed her opinion.

If M. de Richelieu was always a worshipper of women, he was, nevertheless, often ungrateful to them. He had without doubt contributed to the advancement of Mme. du Barry, but at the same time he had taken advantage of her influence; he owed her more than she owed him, since he was not the first cause of her good fortune. However, though he had given himself out as being her champion, he forgot her as soon as she was in the convent, and hardly made her any visits when she returned to Luciennes.

The arrival of Voltaire brought him new pleasures. For a long time this patriarch of the new literature had not seen the French stage upon which his works had so often been applauded. They were playing there one of his last tragedies, "Irene," where one could still perceive sparks of his genius; it captivated everybody, and they made up their minds that an old man so near his end should, notwithstanding the decrees out against him, come without fear into the midst of his worshippers and be a witness of his last successes.

The marshal hastened to see his old friend; they spoke of their youthful errors and follies, and both got younger again for the moment by recalling them.

There was preparing for the poet that grand moment when he was to be crowned in the Theatre de la Nation. It was indeed not favoritism but public intoxication which gave him the palm. A most beloved and worthy sovereign could never have received more varied homage. Richelieu, who shared the triumph of his old friend, came to assure him of the pleasure he felt in the reception which the public had given him; he believed that Voltaire's head was as excitable as his own, and was not astonished to find him seeking to mitigate the joy that he felt. Both shouted rather than spoke. We will give their conversation, which well illustrates the character of Voltaire.

"Well, my dear Voltaire," said the marshal, "you must be very much pleased." "They killed me with their wreaths; I had a few more than the others, and that is all!" "But, my friend, this universal enthusiasm, this general intoxication, all this must have given you a very great pleasure!" "M. le Marshal, it is a triumph of harlequin in comparison with yours." "What do you say? If *I* have a little corner in history, *you* will have the first place in it." "I will not be more than Clement and the scribblers of his class." "My dear Voltaire, such as Clement and his kind do not count! This day must prove to you how much you are loved; how much appreciation is paid to your talents. Did you see the crowd that followed your carriage? That enthusiasm sprang from the heart; it was not fictitious? It was not alone a desire to applaud which made us clap our hands; it was an imperious need, which ordered us to look at

you; it was the great man who tore from us a proof of admiration. Enjoy, my friend, this beautiful moment: it is an honor for you, and also for the Parisians." "I know how to appreciate all that, M. le Marshal. Did they not do the same for that unfortunate "*Siege of Calais?*"

It can be seen to what an extent this truly extraordinary man, who left so far behind him all those who wished to follow the same career, who carried everywhere the torch of philosophy, who knew how to amuse while he instructed, and, finally, who succeeded in all fields of literature, poisoned the moments of enjoyment which his triumph procured for him.

The marshal passed few days without seeing his friend; they had so many things to say that their conversation was always interesting. Voltaire constantly showed regret that he was not summoned by the court, where he believed he should have received recognition; it was hard also for him to console himself for the death of De Lekain, who was buried the day of his arrival. "Tragedy has died with him," he said, "we must not attempt to write any more."

Everybody knows that Voltaire did not long enjoy his glory, and that Richelieu believed that he could call him back to health by sending him his preparation of opium. The remedy remained without effect; but the public believed, as we have already mentioned, that it hastened the end of his days.

The marshal was perhaps as sensitive to his loss, as a man who cared little about anything could be. What

revolted him most was the refusal of the priests of Saint-Sulpice to render the last honors to his friend.

M. de Richelieu spoke bitterly against this occurrence, but diverted by pleasure, he soon forgot his friend and the priests. He learned that in Bordeaux cannons were fired for the intendant. A severe observer of etiquette, he brought complaints before the Marshal de Mouchi, who answered him that he thought the cannonading as extravagant as Richelieu thought it; that if it came from the Chateau Trompette, he would give a scolding to M. de Funel; but that it came from the ships, where a private man may fire salutes for a chamber-maid if he chose. "Your protegé Louis," he added, "intended to cajole, in order to get money for the building of the building of the comédie, and has therefore cannonaded 'Monseigneur, the Intendant.'"

However, in the midst of these pleasures, he found himself isolated; he had often talked of marrying again; and there were rumors about the Présidente Portail; afterwards he decided to choose a young princess from Germany; but all these projects came to naught. What he found the most piquant in his last marriage was, that he had contracted three marriages in three different reigns; for he was always fond of unusual things.

A very grave indisposition determined him finally to choose a companion to watch over his old age. An attack of indigestion brought him to death's door; it was believed that his last moments had come. A man mounted on horseback hastened to inform his son, who was hunting in the plain of Gennevilliers; his friends

looked at him already as a new heir, and the duke hastened to receive the last instruction of his father. He found him unconscious, pale, disfigured, and with drawn features; he spoke to him in vain; the marshal was nearly gone. The son could not bear the heartrending spectacle, and went to his brother-in-law, the Count d'Egmont, to wait until his father had died. Though almost prostrated by the shock, he could not refrain from reflecting on the immense advantages which awaited him, and in spite of himself these ideas of fortune diminished not a little the sorrow which he experienced. He expected every moment the fatal news; but Heaven brought the father to life again; it was announced that he was much better; he went to see him; and the first remark which the marshal made was: "I am not dead yet; you will not inherit this time."

When Richelieu became conscious, he was informed of the visit of the Duke de Fransac, and since, amongst the people that surrounded him, there were some that had little affection for Fronsac, they made the father understand that he had appeared with all the eagerness of an heir; this troubled the old man a little, and he immediately afterwards visited Paris.

He had the habit of visiting Mme. de Rothe, the widow of an Irish colonel, who lived in the Tulleries. Though her rooms were on a very high floor, this did not deter M. de Richelieu, who was much pleased at finding true friendship in this elevated retreat. The incident which just had happened made him feel more than ever the need of an agreeable woman, who would

give herself up to the care of his old age; he saw in this lady the being that was necessary to him, and soon he offered her his hand.

Mme. de Rothe thought she ought not to refuse and the quiet life she led did not offset the brilliant existence which was offered to her and the enjoyment of being the wife of a peer, the senior Marshal of France. The marriage was resolved upon and the marshal hastened immediately to his son to inform him of it.

This news surprised him greatly; he believed that his father was joking; but the marshal assured him that he had made a choice which would be the charm of his old age; he added that he previously married according to his own fancy and that he could do the same thing again; that, besides, he did not fear the arrival of children; that if he should have a son he would make a cardinal of him, and that he might rest assured that it would never do any harm to their family.

The marriage took place, to the great satisfaction of the marshal and Mme. de Rothe; and the bridegroom, eighty-four years old, conducted himself better that day than he had done with his first wife, although then he was but sixteen years old.

CHAPTER LXXXVI.

The marshal occupies himself entirely with the tribunal and the comedy.—He makes his year of service at the court.—He is for some time the only one of the first gentlemen of the chamber able to comply with his functions.—He is unfaithful to his last wife.—A former mistress makes him her sole heir.—Affair with M. de Noé and d'Arthur.—The marshal becomes insane; the tribunal is taken from him; he dies.

THE house of M. de Richelieu took on another appearance after he was married. The multitude of girls did not make their abode there any longer; the actresses alone had the right to approach their superior, and Mme. Richelieu, amazed by the situation in which she found herself, became mediatrix of the favors that he granted. The Opéra-Comique, the child adopted by the Comédie Italienne, which, having run from fair to fair, and from stage to stage, had obtained a stable existence, had just abandoned its mother in order to associate itself with the new Comédie Française. The whole of Paris wished to have another company, and seconded at first the attempts of that which was established in the Théatre Italienne; but the choice of plays was so badly made that the public was soon disgusted with the theatricals which they would have desired to see united to the Opéra, if they had been better conducted.

The comedians, always sure of being masters of their superior, who could not refuse anything to a handsome

woman, made regulations according to their fancy, which the marshal signed as if they had been his own. The intendants of the details, more powerful than the first gentlemen whom they led along according to their caprices, upheld these unjust regulations, which favored their mistresses and their protégées. The authors, alone, were not considered at all; they were submitted to these laws, without even knowing them. All the authors together had not the pay that the three chief comedians drew; and still the latter refused to divide the little boxes of which the product was four hundred thousand livres a year. The authors complained loudly, but their complaints received no attention; they had no women to go as deputies to enforce their demands. They were annoyed by a double reading, which this theatre alone demanded, because they were inconvenienced by it through the annoyances caused by the distributions and repetitions, and finally by the insufficient pay which they drew from it—pay which was fixed without reference to the income or the expenses of the day, and was presented upon a piece of paper by a comptroller.

When by accident an author, who was worse treated than the others, succeeded in gaining a hearing from the marshal, the latter answered him: "What do you wish? They are not rich. They have only had a share this year of eight thousand livres." And the author unsatisfied was obliged to withdraw.

Besides, every complainant was led astray by a former Italian Comedian, who had been clever enough to escape the general proscription, who had remained a comedian

without being one, since he did not play any more, and who, knowing his uselessness, had made himself necessary by mixing himself up in everything. More Italian still than the others, insidious, obsequious if there was need, he had been kept through pity but became a despot when he found himself backed by his superior. This clever man knew the weak spot of the marshal; he went every day to relate to him the scandalous stories of the Comédie; what such and such an actress had done, and the result of the assembly; and the old man, who always loved adventures, took such pleasure in the recitals of this charlatan that he became absolutely needful to him, and was as necessary every morning as his tea, which he had been in the habit of taking for a great many years. We may well judge that such an agent was very influential, and that before him every author had to humiliate himself before his production was played.

The marshal, notwithstanding the amount of time he spent at the Comédie Italienne, did not neglect the affairs of the tribunal. On the one hand he found pleasure, and on the other he had to satisfy his tastes for luxury and ostentation. He insisted on having paid to him, with display, all the honors which were due to his position; he was flattered to see a new court reappear around him, and believed himself enjoying once more those happy moments when everybody pandered to his vanity. Always gorgeous, he had a glittering household, and it is a reproach against his new wife that she allowed more than one hundred thousand livres to be spent for his table alone, and for the rest in proportion. He ought

rather to have paid his creditors, whom he had owed for a long time. It ought to have been easy for him to pay a million of debts within eight years, and instead of hearing the complaints of these same creditors she should have enjoyed the happiness of knowing them satisfied. The marshal had more than four hundred and fifty thousand livres income; in giving up fifty thousand écus for such an object, there would have remained an income ample for living splendidly, and the old servants of the marshal would not have felt the cruel uncertainty of getting the legacies which were made to them.

M. de Richelieu, who, through the affairs of the tribunal, found himself in association with all the ministers, went frequently to Versailles and found occasion to be useful there. He was no longer a courtier almost excluded from the court; he was considered as an extraordinary man who defied all the infirmities of age. He came to fulfill his year of service. He divided with his wife all the advantages of his place; he received the ministers, he went to them, and might almost have believed himself still under the reign of the deceased king by the influence that he had. Louis XVI. received him with kindness, and often reminded the court that if this old man was sometimes wrong he had few courtiers who had done so many beautiful things as he.

Afterwards, when the deafness of the marshal became more pronounced, the king was indulgent enough not to tell him to leave a young court which was not suitable for a man of his age. Some slight passing humor gave him sometimes a suggestion of it; but M. de Richelieu,

who wished to hold on, did not take any notice of these little annoyances. The nature of his service should have decided him to give it up; he had to remain standing for long at a time; but the pleasure which he felt in being near the king kept him from perceiving that he was tired and gave him strength to keep up.

Sometimes the fatigue must have been great, however. One evening he presented, according to usage, the *robe de chambre* to the king. His majesty, occupied with speaking about hunting, did not notice him, but continued speaking with a huntsman, who was at the other side of the room; the marshal with outstretched arms followed him staggering; the king, full of his subject, came back to the place whence he had started. The marshal, always with the *robe de chambre*, followed the steps of his master, who made still a few turns without seeing him. Even this scene, which resembled that of Hector in the "Joueur," and lasted several minutes, was not enough to determine M. de Richelieu to renounce the honors of presenting a shirt and hat.

He felt it glorious to have been called near the king because all his comrades were ill; he alone, notwithstanding his age, found himself able to do his office. His son lay in bed suffering with gout and ennui; he went to see him, and thought it strange that a young man should be subjected to the ills of old age. He told him that he must have courage, and that he should keep himself upon the other foot when he had the gout in the one; in order to prove it to him he remained standing more than a minute upon one leg. The Duke de Fronsac had not

only to bear his own sufferings, but had also to be tortured by this beautiful experiment, a proof that his inheritance was still a long way off.

The marshal often talked about the Comédie at M. de Maurepas's, and as this minister liked to give attention to agreeable things as well as to affairs, he was well received. In his office, as first gentleman, he endeavored to have played the pieces which suited him, and he often obtained favors in payment therefor. There was a plan one day to arrange a supper with Mlle. Contat, who had made a great sensation at the court in several rôles and especially in that of the "Folies Amoureuses"; M. de Maurepas was apparently smitten with her, and they tried to make him pay her debts. But the minister found the debts too high, and was not sufficiently in love to pay them. The Count d'Artois took charge of them some time afterwards.

Richelieu was governed in his household affairs by his wife whose care he greatly appreciated. The most precise housekeeper could have carried attention no further; she even chased away the flies that tormented her husband; she took precautions that he should not give himself up to his former predilection for the women, which he had gratified so often; she feared with reason that by impairing his forces he would hasten the end of his career.

However, her aged husband found means to escape her anxious vigilance. Though Mme. la Maréchale was nearly always a witness of the audiences which he gave

to the actresses, he knew how to seize favorable moments.

He received several letters from a woman who lived in the square of the Comédie Italienne. She was a young beauty, neither a vestal virgin nor entirely a bad girl, who, after having written him about the advancement of a relative whom she had in the *connétablie;* asked him to grant her a meeting at his house. The last letter was very pleasantly written; it raised desires in the marshal to see the one who made the claim upon his kindness. He charged his confidential lackey, Quosimo, who knew how to carry out such details, to fetch an answer to this lady, to examine her at the same time and report whether she was handsome and if she was, to tell her that he would come to-morrow at noon to see her.

The report was favorable. Richelieu went out at the prescribed hour saying he would make a visit to Marshal de Biron, with whom he had had a quarrel because the latter in his office as colonel of the *gardes françaises* had pointed out a distinctive place for his own carriage at the gates of all the theatres and refused to fix one for that of the first gentleman. But this affair troubled him little in that moment; he had himself conducted to the lady who waited for him.

He saw that his man had not deceived him, he found a young blonde of twenty years, well-built, who united beautiful eyes to the best formed mouth and the marshal, who was then more than eighty-six years old, felt that he was getting younger by her side. He promised

to advance her relative and assured her that he had nothing to refuse to such a charming person; but at the same time he begged of her to have pity on a poor old man. The lady believed that M. de Richelieu was accustomed to such extravagant expressions. She joked with him; but the marshal insisted and demanded service for service. Brought to such an extremity the young lady imagined that she would not have great risks to run and half from curiosity she acquiesced, convinced that the infidelity, which she was committing, would not be very great. What was her astonishment! The metamorphosis was complete; it was a young man that adored her and gave her repeated proofs of it and who left her surprised and enchanted by such an unexpected tête-à-tête. We have this from one of her friends to whom she said: "That at the age of twenty a man could not have conducted himself better than the marshal did."

It is certain that he had none of the infirmities of age; he was a little deaf which increased from time to time but that was the only sign of decrepitude. Besides he still rode on horseback; he rode to Conflans for dinner and to the Archbishop of Paris, M. de Beaumont, and came back galloping. He did extraordinary things to the very end of his life.

It was still reserved to the marshal to be made a legatee of a woman, who remembered with pleasure some moments which had formerly been given her. This lady called Gayac, who lived at Compiègne, probably believed that she was honoring herself in leaving about one hundred thousand livres, without counting furniture, to a

grand seigneur, who did not need this increase of fortune, and by disinheriting a nephew without means, who was an apprentice at a workman's shop.

The marshal had no trouble in succeeding to this fortune except to arrange a difference which sprung up on account of the inheritance between him and his son. The good lady willed a part of her property to the Duke de Fronsac and this latter, who desired nothing more than to inherit as quickly as his father, wished to accept it at once; he contested the delivery of the legacy. This little altercation was ended by a compromise between the lawyers.

But in the midst of the contentions, the poor nephew was heard from; he claimed the fortune that of right belonged to him; he painted his misery, and his need of help, and petitioned the legatee, who was swimming in opulence. But his complaints were unheard; the law was against him and the appeal for justice was refused. Many persons said then, that they would be very sorry to be grands seigneurs if they were so mean as that.

Prince Henry of Prussia came to Paris and the marshal, always ready to show off, gave him a splendid fête in his palace. He talked to him about his former campaigns, and about the mistakes which had been made, and that with a memory, which astonished the Prussian general. Richelieu, for whom the King of Prussia had much consideration, seized every occasion to maintain a correspondence with this sovereign; he wrote him about many different subjects and the last

letter was for the purpose of recommending to him, the Count de Chinon, (afterward M. de Fronsac) who was about to travel in Germany. He had a particular predilection for this grandson, he made him his universal legatee; he was pleased with his happy disposition and said continually that he would have all his grandfather's good qualities without his faults.

The answer, that the King of Prussia made to the Count de Chinon, proved how highly he admired the Cardinal de Richelieu and that he also esteemed the talents of the marshal. He questioned the young count, asking him his name, and after he had told him that it was Chinon, the monarch replied: "What is Chinon? I do not know it. Monsieur, when one has a name such as De Richelieu he must not change it for another." We can well imagine that the marshal was highly satisfied, when he was informed of this anecdote.

Old age affected him gradually; and he soon experienced mental shortcomings, that showed the ravages of years. This was noticed the first time in the Comédie Italienne, where he asked for: "*On ne s'avise jamais de tout*," played by Mme. la Ruette et Cailleau, who had retired from the theatre a long time before; and yet, while growing weak in mind he did not abate in haughtiness. Although far from Bordeaux he always wished to have influence there. He obtained permission to return there, and every spring planned to go and see the theatre which had been erected there by him. His wife, who feared that the trip would be hurtful to him, found ways to distract him from the notion; but the marshal still

occupied himself, as formerly, with the details of his governorship.

He gave orders relating to the theatre. He prohibited the aldermen from going to his box; he gave orders to the janitor, only to allow those to go to the theatre who had some business there, and desired to have rigidly executed all the regulations that he gave.

M. de Noé, mayor of the city, claimed on the other hand, that he had some rights, especially the right to give orders to the janitor, whom the City of Bordeaux was paying. Consequently he attempted to enter the theatre accompanied by some aldermen; the janitor refused to allow it; the mayor threatened him with imprisonment, and notwithstanding the janitor's resistance, forced his way into the theatre.

Complaint was made to the marshal, who, believing his authority encroached upon, determined to have revenge. He claimed that the janitor was a military sentinel, who had been interfered with in the performance of his duty. Being chief of the tribunal, he had M. de Noé summoned to render account of his conduct. M. de Noé, who considered that it was simply a police matter, refused to obey and wrote to the minister on the subject.

The contest was brought before the council, composed of people to whom the marshal had rendered some service, and the affair was consequently sent back to the tribunal to decide. M. de Noé was, in this way, in the hands of his opponent, who used his whole authority to punish him; it was a question of revenge and the

marshal was implacable. As M. de Noé would not appear before the judges, the most stringent orders were given to the mounted police to arrest him wherever he should be found and to convey him bound to Paris. To save himself he left the country and reappeared only after the death of his persecutor.

Arthur, the paper manufacturer, had bought from M. d'Angivilliers a piece of land upon the boulevard. Believing himself free to dispose of property which belonged to him, he started to build a house there. The marshal, while taking a walk, saw this building in process of erection. He had always influence enough to prevent the cutting off of his outlook, but this building did not trouble him at all; still he did not like it that any one should build a house on the other side of his street without his permission.

Richelieu had always about him men who were ready to execute his desires whatever they might be. Arthur was summoned; he answered that M. d'Angivilliers, having sold him the real estate, he could do with it what he wanted, that the building would not hurt M. de Richelieu at all and that Richelieu was too just to ask him to suspend the work, the retarding of which would cause much loss to his business.

Richelieu, furious at being resisted, brought the affair before the council. He was sure to find friends there, M. de Vergennes and Bertin being sold to him.

During all this time the works of Arthur were suspended; eighteen months passed without his being able to placate the marshal. He tried to reach him through

all those whom he believed to have influence; he proposed to him a compromise, demonstrating that he did him the greatest wrong for the mere pleasure of so doing. But old Richelieu remained inflexible; he demanded a considerable amount of money or that a judgment be rendered because he knew the latter would be favorable to him.

He was not mistaken; the council, always devoted to the powerful, gave a verdict in favor of the senior Marshal of France, who was pleading against a manufacturer of paper. The public protested; but then, who were the public? Arthur in despair, yet not daring to make known his dissatisfaction, had recourse first to the friends of the marshal and implored their mediation. Finally they succeeded in making Richelieu understand that he would become the talk of Paris, if he continued to ill-treat such a well-known manufacturer. The fear of seeing reappear the libels and the satires which the trial of Mme. de Saint-Vincent had caused was the only motive which made him consent to an arrangement.

Richelieu, who had recovered his mental faculties, in order to be a despot, had not the same energy, when it was proposed that he should reform abuses. He knew that sometimes his favors were sold, but he did not trouble himself any further about it. He received, continually, complaints concerning the administration of the Comédie Italienne but answered, laughingly, that the Comédie Française was worse off and that it would be worse still when his son should have the administration of the theatre. He entrusted his wife with the details

which she believed she understood, and things became worse and worse. The public was obliged to accept comedies pleasing to the first gentleman only. Talent was of little account; it was intrigue that brought success. The first actors played, when they wished, and said insolently: "You may arrange the spectacle of to-morrow because I go into the country," or "I shall go on a hunting party." The public counted upon a piece when it was announced, but the actors and actresses snapped their fingers at their expectations. The authors asked for enforcement of the rules, for the regulations were only followed when they were convenient to the comedians. At the last the authors were not any more listened to than the ushers in the theatre. Some comedians said: "About what does this author complain? He is ungrateful! We let him earn twenty écus a month ago."

The memory of M. de Richelieu was now weakened to such a degree that he was continually absent minded; he could no longer speak connectedly. He was subject to fainting fits. Soon, it was proposed that the tribunal should not be held by a man who could no longer control his mind. M. de Duras was first to ask that it should be transferred to somebody else; the marshal, knowing it, wrote a savage protest to show that he was not yet deprived of all energy. But that did not change the matter and the tribunal was passed over to M. de Contades, as M. de Biron did not wish to have it.

But the public still continued to surround him with vain honors; he always had guards in his antechamber

and, like another Dandin, he believed every day that he was to preside. There were moments, when he regained his memory; then he spoke with fluency and was still very amiable; but his ideas soon got mixed up, he hesitated, and showed impatience and astonishment that he was no longer what he had been.

Chance, which had done so much for him, marked finally the moment of his death; a catarrh, which he could not relieve by expectoration, was the immediate cause of his end; but he was happy to the last moment, and suffered none of the horrors of death. He did not realize the state he was in, and died in peace.

The horoscope which made him fear the month of March, his whole life through, did not realize itself, since it was August, 1788, that saw the end of his career.

END OF THE MEMOIRS OF THE DUKE DE RICHELIEU.

EXTRACT FROM THE
MEMOIRS OF MADAME THE COUNTESS DE GENLIS

Introductory Note.

As a conclusion to these three volumes, and in connection with the Memoirs of the Duke de Richelieu, the editors of this series have appended a portion of the Memoirs of Mme. the Countess de Genlis. This memoir has been placed here not because it relates particularly to the Marshal de Richelieu and his personal life, but because it vividly illustrates one current of the social atmosphere which pervaded France toward the latter end of the reign of Louis XV.

In reading the foregoing portions of this volume and the two volumes which precede it in the series, the inference is almost unavoidable that every citizen of the French nation, high and low, was sunk then in moral iniquity. This was very far from being the true state of the case, however, and this memoir of Mme. de Genlis affords an interesting glimpse of the reverse of the false moral coinage which passed current in high places at that time. It contains within itself ample evidence of its entire sincerity and truth. It shows conclusively that although the dominant tone of the French court and the French nobility considered as a whole was one of corruption, still there did exist at the same time a strata of that same society which was pure, that is, if it be regarded with due reference to standards of morals which then prevailed in other parts of the world. Mme. de Genlis gives a story from which can easily be gathered a picture of the daily life, amusements, occupations, and so forth of that strata toward the end of the 18th century. Its very triviality, the importance which it gives to insignificant happenings, are, in the opinion of the editors, its greatest merits for this purpose.

of the servants, ran into my chamber, telling me that I must immediately mount to the garrets, which I did with great precipitation. The bell was rung, the alarm was given, and all the village assembled in a moment, in order to make trenches in the ground to carry off the water, which, however, swept away several houses which were built on a causeway on the border of the ditches. The water ascended from the court up to the first floor; in the garden it rose to the height of eight feet, as might be seen next day by the marks of clay which it had left on the trees in the alleys. The gardner had sixty bee hives, which he had not time to save; they were carried away and lost. I saw distinctly from the garret window the whole of this imposing spectacle. No lives were lost but the damages done were tremendous. Madame de Sorel lost all her fish, which in great part swam into and remained in our ponds; some remained on the ground and in the meadows, and were picked up there by the peasants during several days. Madame de Sorel, besides this loss, was obliged to pay twelve thousand francs as damages to the proprietors of the houses which were swept away. My brother-in-law, notwithstanding the heritage of her fish, might have also claimed damages; and if he had enforced it she would have been ruined by this accident, which was entirely caused by her own avarice. I have since seen at Hanbury another inundation. I had witnessed in my childhood, at St. Aubin, a year before quitting it, a great fire, caused by lightning, which struck the barns and farm-houses of Sept Fonts, and consumed them in half an hour. I saw distinctly

this great fire, which took place directly opposite the great court of our château, and from which we were only separated by the Loire. I have seen the lightning fall very near the ponds of Genlis. At Villers Cobrets one evening, I saw, along with a hundred other persons, the famous globe of fire which caused so much terror that year. I saw at St. Leu, for the second time in my life an extraordinary storm of hail, and at the arsenal, a column of earth thrown up, which lifted from the ground a young man of fifteen, and threw him five hundred feet forward without killing him. I have suffered a storm at sea; I have seen at Origny a real eclipse of the sun, and I have witnessed two comets. I was sort of a practical course of natural history, in which nothing was wanting but an earthquake and an eruption of Vesuvius.

In the beginning of the autumn, we went to the house of the Marchioness de Sailly, cousin of M. de Genlis, and daughter of the Marquis de Souvré, brother of M. de Puisieux. The château was ten leagues from Genlis, and I was received with all possible cordiality. I there met M. de Souvré, whom I had seen in my childhood at Madame de Bellevau's. He showed me a thousand marks of friendship, and greatly contributed to hasten the reconciliation of M. de Puisieux and M. de Genlis. From Sailly, we went to Frétoy to the Countess d'Estourmelle's, another relation of M. de Genlis, where we met with the same friendly reception. But, an hour after my arrival, I met with a very disagreeable adventure. Madame d'Estourmelle, then fifty-seven, had an only son, five years old. The Isaac of this modern Sarah, was, of

all spoiled children, the most insufferable I ever met with. Everything was permitted him, nothing was refused him ; he was the absolute master of the drawing-room and of the château. M. Emmanuel de Boufflers is the only instance I have seen since to recall to me this singular kind of education. I arrived at Frétoy two hours after dinner ; there was a large party from Paris. I had a cottage bonnet, as it was then styled ; it was quite new, covered with beautiful flowers, and fastened on the left side of the head with a great many pins. I was scarcely seated, when the terrible tyrant of the château came and snatched out of my hands a superb fan and broke it in pieces. Madame d'Estourmelle gave her son a slight reprimand, not for having broken my fan, but for not having asked for it politely. An instant after the child went and whispered to his mother that he wanted my bonnet. "Very well, my child," replied Madame d'Estourmelle, very gravely, "go and ask for it very politely." He immediately ran up to me crying, "I want your bonnet." He was told that he must not say, "I *want ;*" and this was what his mother called "passing over none of his faults." She then dictated to him his formula of demand ; "Madame, will you have the goodness to lend me your bonnet." Every one in the room cried out against this fancy, but the mother and the son persisted. M. de Genlis ridiculed it with some bitterness, and I saw that Madame d'Estourmelle was about to get angry ; I then rose up and generously sacrificing my pretty bonnet, I went and begged Madame d'Estourmelle to unpin it, which she did in great haste, for the

child began to get very violent and impatient. Madame d'Estourmelle embraced me and praised excessively my mildness, my complaisance and my fine hair. She insisted that I looked a hundred times better without my bonnet, though my curls were all deranged, and I looked a very ridiculous figure in full dress, with my hair in disorder. My hat was delivered to the child, on condition of his not spoiling it. But in less than ten minutes, the bonnet was torn, crushed and rendered unfit ever to be worn again. I took care, afterward, to dress my hair simply and to wear neither bonnet nor flowers. But, unfortunately, this spoiled child was grateful for what I had done; he attached himself to me with unmeasured violence and refused to quit my side; as soon as I entered the room he would place himself on my knees; he was very fat and heavy, and not only fatigued me unmercifully, but crumpled my gowns and even tore them by placing upon them loads of playthings. I could neither speak to any one nor hear a syllable of any kind of conversation; and it was even impossible for me to get rid of him so long as to play a game at cards. In all my little journeys I carried my harp with me; but here, if any one wished to hear me play, it was impossible, while I sat at the harp, to prevent the child (who kept continually near it) from playing also on the bass strings, which formed a very indifferent accompaniment to my performance. When I had finished and any one came to take away my harp, the child opposed it with the most horrible cries. The harp was then left, and he played upon it in his own fashion; he scratched some of the chords,

broke others and soon put the harp completely out of tune. When any one told Madame d'Estourmelle that her child must annoy me excessively, she would ask me, "If that were the case?" and she intended to take my polite negative in its literal sense, adding, that at my age one must be charmed to amuse one's self in an infantine manner, and that I formed with her son a delicious group. In fact, the child was not so disagreeable as people imagined; not that I loved his frolics, but his person interested and amused me. He was pretty, coaxing and droll and he had nothing bad in his disposition. With a tolerable education, he might have been easily made a delightful child. His poor mother has largely paid the forfeit of his bad education; the year following this, the child, for the first time in his life had a little fever; he refused all sorts of drink and demanded with violence all kinds of improper food; a slight indisposition became a serious disease, and soon a fatal one; for it was impossible to make him take medicine of any description and all attempts of this kind threw him into fits of passion, that went even to convulsions. He died at the age of six, though he was naturally very stout and of an excellent constitution.

In returning to Genlis by Peronne, my brother-in-law fell dangerously ill in that town of a putrid fever. M. de Genlis immediately called in the most celebrated physician of the place, who desired to have a consultation with another physician of Peronne; and the result of this consultation was, that the one declared that, if the patient were not bled within twenty-four hours, his

death was certain; and the other maintained that bleeding would be fatal. As his brother, and the heir to two hundred thousand francs a year, (the estate of Genlis, and the reversion of that of Sillery,) M. de Genlis was in a terrible predicament. He made up his mind on the step to be taken without hesitation; my brother-in-law had no confidence in any physician but a German named Weiss; he was at Paris, but we calculated that we could have his answer in twenty-four hours. M. de Genlis, under the dictation of the physicians, wrote an account of the patient's state, and the result of the consultation, and entreated Weiss to come to Peronne, or at least to send him his opinion. He then ordered one of his servants, who was the swiftest courier, to take post horses, to hasten to Paris at full speed, and to return in the same manner. M. Weiss would not undertake the journey to Peronne, but he forwarded an excellent consultation, which expressly prohibited bleeding. The courier returned in nineteen hours; the Marquis de Genlis was saved, and owed his life to his brother. We remained twenty-two days at Peronne, at the inn of the Post. I rode out daily; the ladies of the neighboring châteaus sent me fruits, fish, vegetables, and flowers; before quitting Peronne, I went to return them thanks. I ate here excellent pears and peaches. A short time after our return to Genlis, my brother-in-law, scarce yet recovered, went to Paris, and M. de Genlis and I proceeded to Arras, where the regiment of French grenadiers was then stationed. The Count de Guines (afterward Duke de Guines) had a superb house there, which

he lent for my use. I remained there three weeks, and was much amused; they gave me charming entertainments. The officers of the French grenadiers acted to amuse me at the theatre of the town; and I was invited to several dress and masked balls. One of the ensigns, M. de St. P———, whom I have since met in society, paid me a great deal of attention; he seized the occasion of a masked ball to approach me without being remarked, and assumed the character of a dumb person; he never quitted me during the evening, saying only ha, ha, ha, and pointing to his mouth to make me understand that he was dumb. I left Arras at two o'clock in the morning, in order to save a deserter, who was to be shot the same day at ten. The Chevalier de Monchat, major in the French grenadiers, was much interested about this unfortunate man; he found means in concert with M. de Genlis, without compromising himself, to let him escape from prison, at eleven at night, and to bring him into our house, where he was concealed in the closet belonging to M. de Genlis. The Count of Audick gave me a ball and supper, during which my mind was continually absent, and I could think of nothing but our deserter, whom I dreaded might be retaken. I left the ball at half past twelve. We had asked permission of the governor of the town to let us pass at two; for the gates of a fortified town could not be opened at that hour without a special order. M. de Genlis made the deserter put on one of his servant's liveries; we set off at half past one; the deserter was behind the carriage. In passing the gates of the town, I felt the blood freeze

in my veins, so great was my sympathy with the situation of the poor deserter. At four leagues from Arras, he found a horse on the high road; we stopped, and he came to the carriage door to return his thanks; I wept with joy at having saved him! M. de Genlis desired me to salute him, which I did most readily. To have contributed to save the life of a fellow-creature is a happiness which is never to be forgotten.

On arriving at Genlis, letters from Paris informed us that my brother-in-law had relapsed into a dangerous illness. M. de Genlis proceeded immediately to Paris. He promised to write to me, but two posts came without bringing me any intelligence. I then told M. Blanchard that I was very uneasy, and that I was determined to go to Paris. All the carriages were gone, and there only remained a little hunting cart, much broken and in bad condition, and which besides was in use at the château. I promised only to take it as far as Noyon, (four leagues from Genlis,) saying that I hoped to find in that town a conveyance to hire. M. Blanchard gave me ten louis for my journey, and I set off immediately with Mademoiselle Victoire, and a servant on horseback. The fact is, that it was much less through uneasiness than a desire to go to Paris, that I undertook this journey. I did not, in reality, expect to find any conveyance at Noyon, but I was determined to go from thence on horseback to Paris, and for that purpose I put on a riding habit and petticoat, which I proposed to quit on arriving at Noyon. On reaching Noyon, at four in the afternoon, in the month of November, the post-

master told me there were no coaches, at which I was secretly delighted. I demanded three post horses, one for myself, one for my servant, and one for my maid. At this demand Mademoiselle Victoire burst out into a laugh, supposing that I asked the horses in jest; but I assured her, in a tone so decided, that I was in earnest, at least for my own part, that she could no longer doubt it; she seemed stupified by the news. I told her, however, that she might take her choice about accompanying me, but that I was determined to go in this manner. She had been on horseback at parties of pleasure several times, and had been constantly accustomed to ride on an ass; she was strong and courageous, and I had little difficulty in persuading her that she would make an admirable horsewoman. Lemire, my servant, who was the most serious and the least thinking person in the world, proposed two things, to which I consented; the one was to lend Mademoiselle Victoire a pair of breeches and a great coat, that she might ride, as he said, decently, the other, that I should wear horseman's boots. He lent me his; but as they were far too large, he filled up the legs with straw very adroitly; then, transported with joy, while Mademoiselle Victoire was dressing, I sent for the postmaster and acquainted him with my intention; the man, who was exceedingly attached to M. de Genlis, was alarmed at this resolution; and in order to give it a color, I assured him that an affair of the utmost consequence called me to Paris, and I begged him to let the horses be saddled without delay; he told me that he was going to find an excellent one for me, but that it

was not in the house. He searched throughout the town to find me a carriage, and to my great vexation he at last found one, but which had neither windows nor curtains in front. I regretted my large boots, and the glory of riding twenty-five leagues on horseback. Mademoiselle Victoire remained in her male dress; I took off my petticoat, and we traveled thus all night. At each post where we got out, I was delighted at being taken always for a man, and I asked always for ham, in order to make the maidservants get up, to whom I talked all sorts of nonsense. Mademoiselle Victoire was not in particularly good humor; it rained in torrents and she had no hat; I wrapped up her head in a red silk handkerchief. At the first post she got out along with me to warm herself; and, in order to imitate me, she chucked one of the maids under the chin, who bluntly said, "You are too ugly." Yet Mademoiselle Victoire was rather handsome: but the dye of the silk handkerchief had come off upon her face, and had given her skin a scarlet color, which rendered her quite frightful.

M. de Genlis was strangely surprised on my arrival; his brother was out of danger, but still required his attentions, and it was decided that we should remain six weeks at Paris. I saw there, my mother, Madame de Montesson, Madame de Boulainvilliers, the cousin of M. de Genlis, and the Marchioness of Saint Chamant, sister of Madame de Sillery. I went also to a dress ball given by the Spanish ambassador. But Madame de Puisieux and her daughter, the Maréchale d'Etrée, still unreconciled to M. de Genlis, persisted in refusing to receive us.

In five weeks my brother-in-law was entirely recovered, and began to negotiate his marriage with Mademoiselle de Vilmeur, an orphan and rich, the niece of the Chevalier Courten, a Swiss, of whose fortune she was the heiress. We went from time to time to sup at the house of my aunt de Sarcey, who still lived in the Rue de Rohan. One evening as my husband, my brother, and I, were returning home at half past twelve with hired horses, and as we were going slowly up the Rue des fossès M. de Prince, a man came and threw himself before the carriage, crying, that the coachman had thrown him down, which was false and impossible; he stopped the coachman, and loaded him with abuse, and immediately three men came out from an alley and joined him. At this sight our two servants took flight, and M. de Genlis, drawing his sword, sprang out of the carriage, desiring his brother to remain with me; but I entreated the marquis to go to the assistance of his brother, and seeing him hesitate, I leaped out of the coach, crying to M. de Genlis, "Let no blood be shed—do not strike with the point!" My greatest terror was that this affray should end in becoming a bloody combat. My brother-in-law drew his sword also; and the robbers fled. If I had been alone in the coach I must have been robbed. This adventure which M. de Genlis loved to repeat, heightened my character for courage, which was already celebrated by my exploits on horseback.

We returned to Genlis to pass the rest of the winter; and I left it five months gone with child, in the beginning of spring, when we returned to Paris to celebrate the

marriage of my brother-in-law. He married Mme. de Vilmeur, who was then fifteen; the Marquis de Puisieux consented to give away the bride and my brother-in-law determined that I should stand in the place of her mother, which was singular enough, not only because I was but three years older than the bride, but because it was necessary I should, on that occasion, meet for the first time the head of a family, which had till then treated me with so much rigor. He had to lead me into the church, which he did in a very handsome manner; he was very elegantly dressed, with his blue ribbon passed over his coat; he appeared to me equally dazzling and terrible. As he gave me his hand, he perceived that I trembled. "You are cold, Madame," said he; to which I ingenuously replied, "It is not with cold that I tremble." He has since told me that the tone, in which I pronounced these words, affected him almost to tears. The nuptial dinner was celebrated with great magnificence in the country, at the planchette, the seat of the Chevalier Courten; almost all the family was present. Madame de Puisieux, her daughter, the Maréchal d'Etrée, the Princess of Benting, Monsieur and Madame de Noailles, the Duke of Harcourt, and several others. My friends, M. and Madame de Balincour, and Madame de Sailly were not there, nor M. de Souvré; I regretted their absence much. I was treated with great politeness, but coldly, by all the ladies; I maintained a profound silence. They were all extremely occupied with my sister-in-law, and praised her beauty; Madame de Puisieux and the Maréchale caressed her excessively. I

thought I observed that there was a little affectation in all this; and this belief soon removed my timidity. Always, when any one has had an intention of affronting me, a feeling of honest pride has elevated me constantly above the insult intended to be offered, by inspiring me with a perfect indifference to it. There happened at this marriage an incident which has been much talked of, and on which has been founded an anecdote, entirely false, which I have seen printed in many shapes. The Count d'Hérouville was the relation and friend of the Chevalier Courten; he had received a card of invitation, but for himself, only. He had been married ten years to the famous Lolotte, who had conducted herself extremely well since her marriage, but who was visited by none of her own sex. She was then thirty-six years of age, and was still very handsome, and very agreeable; she had a great deal of wit, and her manners were charming. The Count d'Hérouville was foolish enough to bring her along with him; he would have acted more wisely in not coming himself, since his wife was not invited. She was very rudely received, except by the Chevalier Courten, and Messieurs de Genlis; and during dinner many stinging things were said, of which she could not fail to make the application to herself. Nothing ever distressed me more; she behaved with great propriety.

After dinner, my sister-in-law offered her, as well as the other ladies, a bag and a fan, and saluted her. At this action which was indispensable, two ladies shrugged their shoulders, and the others showed their astonish-

ment in their faces. All the men then declared for the fair sufferer, and from that moment paid her marked attention. The other women were in turn offended, and the whole scene was very singular. The Chevalier Courten was in torture, as well as M. d'Hérouville, who went away early. As soon as he had quitted the room with his wife, M. de Genlis cried out, "What a beautiful woman Madame d'Hérouville is!" All the other gentlemen then began to eulogize her; every one felt a desire to avenge the treatment she had received. Next day it was said throughout Paris, that at the moment Madame d'Hérouville arrived, the lap-dog of Madame de Puisieux, called Lolotte, having come into the room, Madame de Puisieux said aloud, "Go along, Lolotte, you are not fit to come among good company." This is absolutely false; Madame de Puisieux did not bring her dog with her, and nothing of the kind was ever said.

All the company remained until eleven o'clock at night. The new-married couple, M. de Genlis, and I, passed six days at the house. This short time was sufficient to make me contract a great friendship for my sister-in-law. She was handsome, and her face would have been faultless, but for an unfortunate laugh, which showed teeth by no means beautiful, and gums which were always swelled; but when she did not laugh her face was beautiful, and its expression agreeable, which made M. de Villepaton say of her, that, "seriously speaking, she was extremely pretty." Her education had been much neglected; but she was never idle; she loved work, embroidered to perfection, and was as dex-

terous as a fairy. She was very violent and contradictory in her humor, and had the obstinacy of a child, but at bottom, she was good-natured, obliging, ingenious, and very lively. We never had the slightest dispute; and I was delighted to have a companion so amiable and so young.

The Chevalier Courten, the master of the house, and uncle of my sister-in-law, was a witty and agreeable old gentleman of seventy-seven. He had served with much distinction in the army, and in various negotiations; he had seen many things, and related them with a charm peculiar to himself. I have never found in any one of his age, more gayety, mildness, strength of memory, and pleasantness of manner. He joined to a great acquaintance with society, and the tone of the French court, great simplicity, and a sort of naïveté, which seemed to belong to the manners of Switzerland, his native country; and this gave to his conversation and to his wit an air of youth and originality, which rendered him the most interesting and amiable of all possible old men.

On quitting La Planchette, we all returned to Genlis. My brother passed that year at Genlis. He had just been received into the engineers, and had undergone his examination in Bezout, with the utmost credit to himself; in fact, he showed a decided genius for the mathematics. I was transported with joy at seeing him again; he was handsome and ingenuous, and he had a sort of childish gayety which suited my humor exactly. One evening, when there was company at the château, and while my sister-in-law and Messieurs de Genlis were play-

ing after supper at reversis, my brother proposed to me a walk in the court which was spacious, covered with sand, and planted all round with flowers, to which I consented. When we reached the court, he expressed a wish to take a walk in the village. I was as willing as he. It was ten o'clock; all the public houses were lighted; and we saw, through the windows, peasants drinking cider. I observed with surprise that they all wore a very grave air.

My brother was seized with a fit of frolicsome gayety, and he knocked at a window, crying out, "Good people, do you sell any sacré chien?" and after this exploit he dragged me after him, as he ran into a little dark street, where we both hid ourselves, ready to die with laughter. Our delight was increased by hearing the tavern-keeper at a door of his house, threatening "to cudgel the little blackguards" who had knocked at his window. My brother explained to me that, sacré chien meant brandy. I thought all this so pleasant that I insisted on going to another little tavern adjoining, to make the same polite inquiry, which met with the same success; we repeated several times that agreeable pastime, trying which of us should say, "sacré chien," and ending by shouting it together, and every time running off to hide ourselves in the little street, where we burst into fits of laughter till we could hardly stand. Happy age! at which we are so easily transported with gayety; when nothing has yet exalted the imagination or troubled the heart.

My brother remained six weeks with us. M. de Genlis, with much kindness, made him a present of every-

thing which could be useful or agreeable to him in a garrison in which he was to remain a long time. He went to Mézières; we promised to write regularly to each other, and we both kept our word.

M. de Genlis returned to Paris in the month of August, and went to live in a pretty house with a garden in the Culde-sac Saint Dominique, of which my brother-in-law had hired the ground floor, and we the first. There I awaited the time of my accouchement. The idea that I was about to become a mother rendered me much more staid. I had commenced, several months before, a work which I entitled, "Reflections of a Mother Twenty Years of Age," though I was then but nineteen. This work, which I lost twenty-five years after, with so many other manuscripts, had nothing romantic in it; I afterward extracted from it many thoughts and ideas which I transferred to Adèle and Théodore. I continued to read history with great application; and for my recreation, I occasionally read poetry and plays. I undertook, at this time, the reading of the voluminous voyages edited by the Abbé Prévost; and I read them all through without missing a line, even of the double narrations.

On the 4th of September I was brought to bed of my dear Caroline, that angelic creature, who was for twenty-two years my happiness and my pride, and whose irreparable loss has caused me the deepest sorrow, and has been the greatest misfortune of my life. She was born beautiful as an angel, and that enchanting face of hers was, from her cradle to her tomb, the most faultless the world ever saw. I did not suckle her, for it was not then

the fashion; besides, I could not have done so in my situation, as we were always obliged to pay visits and undertake little journeys. She was nursed at two short leagues from Genlis, at a village called Comanchon. How many sentiments, till then unknown, sprang up in my breast with the blessings of being a mother! How I loved my child! how dear life became to me! and with what an anxious interest I cast my eyes to the future, to which my thoughts had never before turned! I discovered in my child a new existence, a thousand times preferable to my own.

Nine days after my confinement, the Maréchale d'Etrée came to see me and brought me as a present some very fine Indian stuffs. She assured me that her father and mother would receive me with pleasure, and that Madame de Puisieux, whom I dreaded extremely, would present me at court as soon as I should be able to leave my room. In five weeks after I went to pay a visit to Madame de Puisieux, and, as during my whole life I have never made advances to any one who has treated me with coldness or indifference, I was very silent and cold in my turn. I did not make a very favorable impression on her at this interview. Eight days after, she carried me to Versailles; and, to complete the tortures of the journey, it was tête-à-tête with her in her own carriage. She talked to me of nothing but the manner in which my head was to be dressed, advising me, with a critical air, not to wear my hair so high as I usually did, assuring me, that it would be very disagreeable to the princesses and the old queen. I replied

merely, "It is enough, Madame, that it is displeasing to you." This answer appeared to be agreeable to her; but immediately after I relapsed into my former silence; and I saw that it annoyed her extremely. At Versailles, we resided in the splendid apartments of the Marshal d'Etrée; I was delighted with the marshal; I looked upon him with a lively interest; I knew that he had achieved numerous victories in the field and that he was one of the wisest statesmen at the councilboard. He joined to his honors the most unaffected simplicity and perfect goodness of heart. Mesdames de Puisieux and d'Etrée really persecuted me the day following, which was that of my presentation; they made me dress my hair three different times, and fixed upon the mode which became me the least, and which was the most Gothic of them all. They obliged me to wear a great deal of rouge and powder, two things which I detested; they insisted upon my wearing my full dress body for dinner, in order, as they said, to accustom me to it; these bodies left the shoulders uncovered, cut the arms, and were horribly tight; besides this, in order to show my shape, they made me lace myself till I could scarcely suffer the pressure.

The mother and daughter had next a bitter dispute on the subject of my ruff, and on the manner in which it should be fastened; they were seated and I was standing up quite worn out and provoked during their debate. The ruff was fastened on and taken off at least four times; at last the maréchale carried the day by the decision of the three waiting maids, which gave great

offence to Madame de Puisieux. I was so exhausted that I could scarcely support myself when I had to go to dinner. I was allowed to go without my large hoop, though the ladies had at one time thought of making me wear that too in order to accustom me to it. When the marshal saw me, he cried out, "She is far too much powdered and rouged; she was a hundred times handsomer yesterday." Madame de Puisieux appealed to him about my ruff, which he approved of; and all dinner time nothing was discussed but my dress. I ate almost nothing, for I was so tight laced that I could hardly breathe. On quitting the table, the marshal passed into his closet and I was left to Madame de Puisieux and the maréchale, who made me finish my toilette, that is to say, put on my hoop and train, then rehearse my courtesies, for which I had taken a master; it was Gardel, who at that time taught the court. The ladies were extremely well pleased with my performance; but Madame de Puisieux forbade me to push back the train of my gown by sliding my foot gently under it, as I withdrew backwards, saying that it had a theatrical air. I represented to her that if I did not push back my long train, my feet would get embarrassed in it, and that I should fall down; she only repeated, in a dry and imperious tone, that it was theatrical, to which I replied not a word. Afterward the ladies began to dress themselves and I availed myself of this to remove adroitly some of my rouge, but unfortunately, just as we were setting out, Madame de Puisieux perceived it, and said, "Your rouge has come off, but I shall put on more;" and

taking from her pocket a patch box, she plastered my face with rouge more deeply than before. My presentations went off very well, and the day was well-chosen, as a great many ladies were at this levee. Louis XV. spoke a good deal to Madame de Puisieux and said many flattering things about me. Though no longer young, he appeared to me very handsome; his eyes were of a deep blue, royal blue eyes, as the Prince of Conti said; and his look was the most imposing that can be imagined. In speaking he had a laconic manner and a particular brevity of expression, in which there was nothing harsh or disobliging; in short, there was about his whole person something majestic and royal, which completely distinguished him from all other men. A handsome exterior in a king is by no means a matter of indifference; the people and the great bulk of the nation can see but by stealth, as it were, the great potentates of the earth; they regard them with eager curiosity; the impression they receive from that examination is indelible, and exercises the greatest influence over all their sentiments. A noble air, a frank expression of countenance, a serene aspect, an agreeable smile, mild and polished manners, are precious gifts to princes, which education may confer but to a certain degree. Brutal or contemptuous manners produce the hatred of their subjects; if they have a gloomy or anxious air they inspire mistrust and dread; if they have a mean or ridiculous appearance, they are despised—especially in France, where the lowest individuals of the populace have the finest and truest tact for

seizing all the shades which express, by the tone, the gestures, or the look, the various emotions of the mind.

The dauphin, the son of Louis XV., was just dead, and the court was in deep mourning. I was presented to the old queen, the daughter of Stanislaus, King of Poland; that princess, already attacked with the disease (a decline) of which she died fifteen or eighteen months after, was reclining on a sofa. I was much struck at seeing her wear a lace night-cap, with large diamond ear-rings. She interested me extremely because it was said to be the death of her son which was carrying her to the tomb. She was a charming old woman; she had still a very pretty face, and a ravishing smile. She was gracious and obliging, and the soft tone of her voice, which had a langor in it, went directly to the heart. Her whole conduct had ever been distinguished by irreproachable purity; she was pious, good, and charitable; she loved literature, and was a discriminating patroness of men of letters. She had great quickness of talent; and many exquisite sayings of hers have been quoted. I was afterward presented to the princesses, and to the rest of the royal family; and in the evening I went to the card room of the princesses. I was also introduced to Madame de Civrac, the maid of honor to the Princess Victoire. Her husband was under great obligations to M. de Puisieux, who had caused him to be appointed ambassador to Vienna, where he then was. Madame de Civrac was delightful, from her frankness and her good-nature. In spite of extreme timidity, I soon found myself at my ease with her; and I cultivated her friendship

up to the period of her death. A few days after my presentation we returned to Genlis. I there passed the summer very agreeably; we acted plays at the theatre, decorated by the Chevalier Don Tirmane, where we had already played several pieces. In the course of that summer we acted "Nanine," "The Précieuses Ridicules," "The Méchant," and "The Countesse d'Escarbagnas;" the best performers were Monsieur de Genlis and myself; my sister-in-law, notwithstanding all my lessons, could not act well, but she made no pretention to this kind of talent. We had the neighbors and the peasants for audience. The sentimental scene of gratitude with Nanine and her father produced shouts of laughter when the spectators discovered in the person of Philippe Humbert, one of our neighbors of thirty-five or thirty-six years of age, whose white wig, which he had assumed to give him the appearance of an old man, seemed to them the most comical thing in the world. M. le Pelletier de Morfontaine, the superintendent of Soissons, came to our performances. I had just then heard of the institution of the Rosiere of Salency; I spoke of it with enthusiasm to M. de Morfontaine, and it was decided that we should go to Salency to crown the Rosiere. I presented the Rosiere with a dress and a cow, and M. de Morfontaine gave her an annuity for life. He had sent for musicians, and gave a very charming ball in a barn, beautifully decorated with colored lamps, leaves, and garlands of roses. Messieurs de Sauvigny, Feutry, and De Genlis, wrote some pretty couplets upon the fête; those of Monsieur de Genlis were sent to Paris, where

they were found so agreeable that they were inserted in the *Mercury*. There was one of them which was addressed to me; and I confess that when I saw it in print, I was much more flattered than when I heard it sung in the barn of Salency.

As M. de Genlis had caused my harp to be carried to Salency, I played on it in the barn before the ball, which produced among the worthy inhabitants of Salency, and its musicians, an inexpressible enthusiasm. M. Feutry wrote, on this occasion, the following couplet, which I only quote, because it was really an impromptu:—

Sur L'air: De tous les capucins du monde.

Genlis, votre harpe magique
Afface l'instrument antique
Dont on nous vante les succès.
Par lui Saul vit disparoître
Et ses transporte et ses accès,
Et vous en faites ici naître.

In consideration of the song, the fête, and the appropriateness of the time chosen for the compliment, I forgave M. Feutry that eternal comparison about Saul and David, which caused me in general so much annoyance. There are moments when everything pleases; we should seize them when we may. All which belongs to that day's amusement has left behind it a delicious recollection, on which I love to dwell!

M. de Sauvigny wrote a poem in prose, called the Rosiere of Salency, which he dedicated to me; afterward I wrote a comedy on the same subject, which is to be found in my Theatre of Education. Seven or eight

years afterward, the Rosiere of Salency had a law suit with the lord of the manor, who unreasonably refused to give his hand to lead the Rosiere to church, and furnish the crown of roses and the blue sash, in memory of that which Louis XIII., when at Varennes, near Salency, sent to the Rosiere by a captain of his guards. The virtuous prior of Salency made a journey to Paris about this absurd lawsuit; he called upon me and related the story; upon which I wrote a memorial, which I gave the prior; this memorial was presented to the council, and the Rosieres gained their plea. The memorial was written in the name of the prior; he presented it to the queen, who interested herself warmly in the affair. In gratitude for what M. de Morfontaine had done for the Rosieres I promised to go and visit him at Soissons; I went there with M. de Genlis; and we passed a fortnight at the house of M. de Morfontaine, amidst a constant round of entertainments. I saw there, for the first time, Dorat, with whom I was extremely taken, not because he wrote beautiful verses about me, but because he had, in reality, agreeable and elegant manners, and because he spoke sensibly, the rarest thing in the world among men of wit. M. de Morfontaine did a great deal of good among the persons under his management: his sentiments were generous, he was a man of talent, he was polite, and magnificent; he loved the arts, and persons of ability; but he had the mania of making verses, and the misfortune always to compose bad ones.

From Soissons we returned to Genlis, where I recommenced my occupations with fresh ardor. As Mes-

sieurs de Genlis went almost daily on shooting parties, my sister-in-law and I were often alone; we went constantly to Comanchon to see my dear little Caroline; my sister-in-law in a cabriolet, and I on horseback. My sister-in-law did not prove enceinte, and so far from being jealous of my having a charming infant, she was fond of my Caroline even to folly; a sentiment which she has always preserved, and which, of itself, would have been sufficient to attach me to her. When we were alone at the château, which often happened, we both worked at embroidery; and the steward, M. Blanchard, read to us aloud. He read to us in this way a part of the Roman History of Laurent Echard, and the Spectacle de la Nature of Pluche, which began to give me a taste for natural history. I made a little girl gather for me all the insects that she found in the fields. She brought us a large box, which we unluckily opened in my bed-room, and out of it crawled enormous spiders, large earth-worms, frogs, toads, etc. At the sight of these monsters, we took flight, extremely discouraged in our pursuit of the study of natural history. For more than a fortnight, though great pains had been taken to remove all these insects from my room, I still found some now and then; however, we continued the reading of the Spectacle de la Nature. M. Blanchard next read to us the Théâtre of Fagan, an ingenious and witty author, whose comedies pleased us exceedingly. Besides these readings aloud, I read in my room, while they combed my hair, which was a long operation, and while my head was being dressed, the Ancient History of Rolin, the lively

comedies of Dufreshy, and afterward those of Maurivaux, for the second time. I confess that I was excessively fond of that author; he was perfectly acquainted with the secrets of the human heart, and he has unfolded them with a delicacy and a grace which are to be found in no other male author. He is inimitable when he paints the caprices, the inconsistencies, and the violence of a woman agitated by vexations arising out of a little affection and a great deal of self-love; this was all he knew, but he knew it well. Nevertheless, Moliere, who has observed everything, has depicted something of the same sort in his Princesse Elide, which is also a surprise of affection. The style of Maurivaux is often full of mannerism; but by a dexterity of wit, which was peculiar to him, it becomes not so much affection as originality; and often, also, in his dialogue, which is always ingenious and sparkling, there are charming touches, at once fine, natural, and full of a certain piquant ingenuousness. Ten years after the period to which I allude, I was wo longer the same passionate admirer of Maurivaux that I then was; I thought he had spoiled a great number of writers; but I thought him then, and I think him still, an author far above mediocrity. He has admirably caught the most delicate shades of various sentiments and various habits, and in the art of observing things, and in depicting them well he has infinitely surpassed Sterne, and many authors who have been since admired, both in France and in England. Without mentioning the comedies of Maurivaux, we may safely assert that in his novels—his Mariane and his Paysan Parvenu, there

are many scenes far superior to any parts, even the best, of the Sentimental Journey.

I had still preserved my taste for teaching, and I exerted it for the benefit of a little girl called Rose, daughter of the dairymaid of the château ; I took her into my service, and as she seemed to have a taste for music, I taught her to play upon the harp ; but my instrument was enormously large, and in the course of six months, I perceived that my pupil was becoming hump-backed: I therefore renounced my plan of giving her this accomplishment; and I ordered for her from Paris a pair of whalebone stays, with a little plate of lead placed on the side of the shoulder which threatened to be crooked. In three months her shape was perfectly restored, and even became in the end very handsome, I also gave my sister-in-law lessons of singing ; but she had no voice : I was more fortunate in giving her lessons of spelling, with which she was but indifferently acquainted : I taught her orthography completely in three months. On her side, she taught me to embroider, an art in all its branches of which she excelled ; in her it was a real talent, and I have never been able to come near the perfection of her work ; she was also very skillful in working tapestry. She had nothing of what is called wit ; she did not say fine things ; but she was far from being stupid : she had even naturally a very fair capacity ; for example, she calculated, for her age, in a remarkable manner, and with a facility to which I could never attain ; and in the end she showed very great intelligence in matters of business. She had naturally a very good disposition ; with-

out any other defects than a childishness, which led her to be somewhat obstinate and contradictory. At the same time she took an interest, and with warmth, in everything in which others were interested, whether it was a serious matter, or a frolic of gayety. Our readings interested her greatly, at the same time if I proposed to her a school girl's frolic, she would join in it with all her heart. There was at Genlis the largest bathing machine I ever saw; four people could easily have bathed in it. One day I proposed to my sister-in-law that we should both bathe ourselves in it in milk, and that we should go into the neighborhood, and buy all the farmers' milk. We dressed ourselves in the disguise of peasant girls, and mounted on asses, led by John, the carman, my first riding master; we left Genlis at six in the morning, and went to the distance of two leagues all round to bespeak all the milk at the little farm-houses, desiring them to bring it next morning to the château of Genlis. In the cottages where we were afraid of being recognized, we waited for John at a little distance, and entered into all the others. We took a milk bath which is the most delightful thing in the world; we had caused the surface of the bath to be strewed over with rose leaves, and we remained two hours in that charming bath. I composed at this time a little novel, entitled, "The Dangers of Celebrity:" four or five years after I lost the manuscript: the idea of it was moral, but as far as I can remember it, the novel was tiresome.

I had been very happy at Genlis, especially from the time of my brother-in-law's marriage; but my brother

insisted upon paying him a small annual sum; and I could not have been more absolute mistress, if the château had been my own, thanks to the attentions of my brother-in-law and his wife. My sister-in-law at an age when a young woman loves to act the mistress of the house, had nothing of that passion: she desired, with all the kindness of a good disposition, that I should command in her château as freely as herself; she never suffered the servants, in speaking of her, to call her merely madame; she made them mention her by her title, and me by mine. These are little matters, but they deserve to be mentioned; for they are proofs of noble and delicate sentiments. My sister-in-law had religious principles, and a taste for occupation; she was incapable of envy or malice; with a very handsome face she was not a coquette; she sincerely loved her husband; and she wanted nothing to make her a person of merit and of exemplary conduct, but a more moral and faithful husband.

I constantly practised medicine at Genlis, with my Tissot in my hand, and in concert with M. Racine, the village barber, who always came gravely to consult me when he had any patients. We went to visit them together; all my prescriptions were confined to simple drinks, and to broth, which I regularly sent from the château. My practice served at least to moderate M. Racine's rage for emetics, which he prescribed for almost all kinds of diseases. I was perfect in the art of bleeding; the peasants often came to beg me to let blood of them; but when it became known that I always gave

them twenty-four or thirty sous after bleeding, I had very soon a great number of patients, who were attracted, I began to suspect, by the thirty sous. I then ceased to bleed, but took the prescription of M. Milett, the surgeon of La Fère, who came every eight or ten days.

The only property which M. Genlis then had was the estate of Sissy, five leagues from Genlis; it was worth ten thousand francs a year, which are equal to twenty thousand at present; we did not spend five thousand out of this, so that we were completely at our ease, and M. de Genlis, who was full of goodness and humanity, did a vast deal of good in the village; my brother-in-law and his wife were also extremely generous, and were in return adored by the peasants.

One morning, when sitting alone in my room, I was told that a pretty young woman belonging to Sissy wished to speak with me. I desired her to be brought in, and I saw in reality, a young country girl of sixteen, beautiful as an angel. She threw herself in tears at my feet, but refused to explain what she wanted. I lifted her up, and kissed her with a tenderness which gave her confidence, and she then confessed that she had been seduced by our gamekeeper, who was forty-five years old, and who had promised to marry her; that she was with child, and that he now refused to keep his word because she had nothing; and she added with sobs, "I have now nothing to do, but to throw myself into the river!" I consoled her as well as I could, and made her remain at the château. I went and related the history to my sister-in-law, and we both spoke about it to my

husband, who, in anger, wished to discharge his gamekeeper. We made him perceive that this would be the ruin of the poor girl, and it was finally agreed that he should give her a marriage-portion; that I should give her bride-clothes and a little outfit; that my sister-in-law should give her a lace cap and a gold cross, and my brother-in-law, three pair of coarse sheets. M. de Genlis immediately sent for his gamekeeper, who was quite unprepared. . . . We were curious, my sister-in-law and I, to see the seducer. He appeared to us very old, but he was tall; he had a good air, and wore a green dress laced with silver; he had also a military look, which was sufficient to give him an advantage over all the youths of the village. M. de Genlis, on seeing him, felt his anger rise, and without any preamble, he bluntly addressed him thus:—"You are a scoundrel. . . . I give you three hundred francs and a cow. . . ." This singular opening gave us a great inclination to laugh; the gamekeeper grew pale with surprise, fear, and joy; and when the affair was explained to him, and all that had been done for the girl, he appeared in an ecstasy of pleasure. I have never seen anything more touching than the gratitude and the joy of the poor girl. M. de Genlis sent them back to Sissy, to have the banns published, and fixed their marriage day at three weeks from thence, promising to come with me to the nuptials, which we did. On the day appointed, we quitted Genlis on horseback, at daybreak; on arriving at Sissy, we were received by a cavalcade, which came to meet us, composed of the notables of the village; and they almost killed me by

firing in honor of me a gun which was over-charged. The discharge threw me backwards, but luckily the gun did not burst. I was not wounded, however, and the accident did not prevent me from dancing at the wedding. We did not return to Genlis until night had completely set in.

The Chevalier de Barbantane came to Genlis this year; he was the brother of the Marquis of Barbantane, of the Palais Royal, and was as amiable as his brother was disagreeable. To a great deal of wit, he joined a frank and rallying gayety, a delightful manner of telling a story, and a most estimable disposition. His sallies, always, always lively and pleasant, contrasted singularly with his grave and stately air, and with his features, which had something severe about them. He was then thirty-six or thirty-seven. He was a great lover of music; my harp enchanted him, and this commenced between us a friendship which lasted up to the revolution.

About the second or third of August, M. de Genlis and I went to Rheims on a visit to my grandmother, the Marchioness of Droménil, who, knowing that M. de Genlis was reconciled with M. and Madame de Puisieux, consented at last to receive us. Madame de Puisieux was this year at Vaudreuil, at the house of the president Portail, so that we did not go to Sillery. Madame de Droménil had acquainted her grandson, in her letter, that she could not let us stay with her longer than a week. I met the respectable grandmother of my husband with equal tenderness and respect; she was eighty-seven years of age, extremely small, but perfectly well

proportioned; her little hands and feet seemed to belong to a child of six; her features equally delicate; and her mouth so small, that she had a spoon, knife and fork for her own peculiar use; all the articles of furniture she used were made on purpose for her; she had her little tongs, her little arm-chair, her high chair on which she sat at table; and the sweet little tones of her voice were suited to this interesting miniature. She had once been very pretty and she still preserved a very sweet and good-humored physiognomy. She was not deaf; her sight was good; she walked well, and had no kind of infirmity; her memory was excellent; she was lively; she had a delicate and agreeable kind of wit, and an admirable heart. She looked to me like a good and beneficent fairy; on seeing me she rose up, and stretched out her arms to me; I was touched with the tenderest emotions; I ran towards her, and, to receive her embrace, I knelt upon my knees, and in that position, I reached her head; she embraced me several times; and then, turning towards M. de Genlis, she said, "My dear grandson, you have made a good choice, she is charming." I soon found myself at my ease with her. I sat down by her, and held her little hands in mine; I caressed her with the same feeling as if I were caressing an infant, mingled with the veneration which such an age inspires. After dinner my harp was unpacked, and I played upon it as much as she pleased. She had received on a visit the year preceding, her two granddaughters, Mesdames de Belzance, and De Noailles, daughters of the Marquis of Droménil, brother of the late Marchioness of Genlis,

my mother-in-law; she told me that I was infinitely more agreeable to her than those ladies: yet Madame de Belzance, who died very soon after of consumption, was lovely as an angel, and mild and charming in her manners and disposition. In the evening Madame de Droménil made me the same present she had made her two granddaughters; she gave me one hundred louis in a beautiful purse, which I received with pleasure, in order to give them to M. de Genlis. She became so much attached to me that, in place of a week, she kept me with her two months, which I passed very agreeably. Madame de Droménil received at her house all the best society of Rheims, among whom I found many agreeable persons; she was also invited by many of the canons of the cathedral; and as she was very proud of my talent for the harp, she made me play what she called a little air at each visit. I was at several balls given in the town; and Madame de Droménil gave two at her own house. Almost every morning she carried me to the promenade in the public walk; she rode in her carriage and I on horseback; I kept by the door of the coach, and talked quantities of nonsense to her, which made her laugh till the tears came into her eyes; all the childishness which I had naturally in my disposition seemed charming to her. Often at her own house I took her in my arms, and carried her like a child into my room, and through all the house, for she was as light as a feather; all that I did pleased and enlivened her. She showed me everything interesting and curious that the town contained; its fine

churches, the shaking pillar, and its splendid manufacturies.

At the end of two months I took leave of Madame de Droménil. She was so grieved to lose me, and I loved her so affectionately, that I would have remained with her a month longer, had I not promised to Madame de Boulainvilliers that I would go and pass the autumn at her château of Grisolles in Normandy. I wept much on quitting this best and most amiable of grandmothers. M. de Genlis gave her his word that he would bring me back the following spring. I shall never forget that Madame de Droménil made my coach to be loaded with gingerbread and pears. I left Rheims full of gratitude for her kindness and affection for herself.

In going to Grisolles the axletree of our carriage broke. The shock was very violent; my maid, who was on the front seat of my coach, fell heavily upon M. de Genlis, and with her head, which struck against M. de Genlis, she blackened his eye in a most horrid manner, and received no accident herself. M. de Genlis was exceedingly vexed about his black eye; for it had been agreed that we were to act plays on our arrival at Grisolles, and he had to perform two parts of lovers, which he had thoroughly studied. M. de Boulainvilliers, son of Samuel Bernard, so famous for his immense wealth, had just been appointed provost of Paris, which was a very excellent place. He had married a cousin of M. de Genlis. Madame de Boulainvilliers was then thirty-five or thirty-six, she had been very pretty, and her face was still very elegant and agreeable; she had a spotless reputa-

tion, a graceful wit and a most generous and feeling heart. She had three daughters; the eldest, afterward Baroness de Crussol, was at that time fourteen or fifteen; she had neither the talent nor the agreeable manner of her mother; she was considered handsome by her family: she had one of those faces which seem lovely in description, but which are only beautiful because in describing them we suppress everything depreciatory. She was tall and thin; she was very fair; she had large eyes and a small mouth; but her figure was stiff, and her shape somewhat twisted; her complexion was pale and white, her eyes round and staring, her face entirely void of expression, and her whole physiognomy, of grace. Her second sister, who married M. de Faudoas, was ugly. The third, who married M. de Tonnere, and who was then six years old, was quite charming, and has always been remarkable for her beauty, talents and excellent disposition. As for M. de Boulainvilliers, he was by no means beloved in society; but he always seemed to be a very worthy man, who did the honors of his house extremely well. He was said to be a splendid miser; which generally signifies a person who is believed to combine saving habits and regularity in his house-keeping, with an appearance of show and magnificence.

M. de Genlis, who had, as I have stated, got a violent blow on the head when the axletree broke, felt next day such a sensation of heaviness and burning about it that he sent for the surgeon of the place and had himself bled. He had a room next to mine; the next day he called me early, and made me feel his head, which was

quite as hot as before; and he desired me to bleed him a second time, because the surgeon had made two punctures the preceding night before succeeding in drawing blood. I replied that I should be afraid to bleed him, and that I was sure my emotion would render my hand unsteady. Being extremely uneasy, I felt the crown of his head again, where all the heat seemed to be; and in doing so, I touched the wall against which the head of the bed stood, and burnt my hand; or, at least, I felt as if it were burnt, so great was the heat. It was a warm stove which passed by the wall, and which was lighted very early every morning, it being extremely cold, though it was but the beginning of October; and this was the sole cause of the sensation of pain in the head, for which M. de Genlis was about to make himself be bled a second time.

We proceeded to act our plays. I played Lisette in "Les Jeux de l'Amour et du Hasard"; and Madame de Boulainvilliers played Silvia very agreeably. The parts of Dorants and Bourguignon were ably filled by Messieurs de Genlis; my brother and sister-in-law arrived at Grisolles a few days after us. All the gentry of the neighborhood, many inhabitants of the neighboring towns, and a great number of officers in garrison, composed our audience, which was very numerous; our theatre contained five hundred persons, and was always full. We played for our afterpiece, Zénéide; my sister-in-law played that part, and I, Olinde, which is a character which a woman may impersonate, as it is quite developed in a long domino. We gave three representa-

tions, which were all followed by balls. At this château I first became acquainted with M. de Chambray, who had an estate five leagues off. M. de Chambray was a man of great learning and information, an excellent naturalist, and well versed in natural philosophy; he lived retired on his estate, where he occupied himself solely with his studies, and the education of his daughter, a charming girl of sixteen, and his son who was in his sixteenth year. I became much attached to Mademoiselle de Chambray, whose information was astonishing for her age. She inspired me in this respect with a lively desire of emulation, for she surpassed me infinitely. She confirmed me in my nascent tastes for the study of natural history. I rode on horseback a good deal at Chambray. On the 15th of November, my brother-in-law and his wife, with M. and Madame Boulainvilliers returned to Paris; M. de Genlis and I went to Chambray, where we passed five weeks in the most agreeable solitude. I arrived there more than three months enceinte, but through a peculiarity of constitution I was not at all aware of it; and what was equally singular, I met with no ill consequences from riding out daily in a magnificent forest of fir trees. I played a great deal on the harp; and passed whole hours with Mademoiselle de Chambray in her cabinet of natural history, of which the collecting had occupied her father ten years; she explained everything to me in the most luminous manner. She had also made a peculiar study of geography; had read a prodigious number of voyages; and her conversation, which was free from all kind of pedantry, was as agreeable as instructive to me.

We passed the winter at Paris; I was then twenty. I went once a week to dine at my aunt's, Madame de Montesson, or with the Marchioness de la Haie, my grandmother. These latter dinners were by no means to my taste; my grandmother treated me with extreme coldness; and as she wore on her face an enormous quantity of red and white, and painted her eyebrows and dyed her hair "to conceal the irreparable ravages of years," her appearance was far from respectable in my eyes. She had with her an unmarried sister, Madame Desaleux, who was as good and kind as my grandmother was imperious and haughty; yet these two sisters were models of perfect friendship. Madame de Montesson treated me with great kindness, and caressed me excessively, but never endeavored to show me to advantage in the eyes of my grandmother, who, on her side never asked me to sing or to play on the harp. Besides these dinners, I went from time to time to my grandmother's in the morning, while she was at her toilette; it was the hour she allotted for receiving me; and I always found her before her glass and surrounded by her women; she treated me with the most fatiguing sermons I have ever heard; as she had nothing to say on the present, she preached to me about the future; I never answered a word, and when she had exhausted all the commonplaces which she was constantly in the habit of repeating, and the last pin of her head-dress was fixed, she used to rise up and dismiss me. At my grandmother's I met a celebrated man of letters, who was already attacked with the disease (consumption) of which he died a few years after-

ward; this was Colardeau, who, in my opinion, has left behind him a reputation infinitely above his merits as a poet. A middling tragedy, and a pretty translation of a fine English epistle, (that of Eloisa to Abelard,) were not sufficient to raise him to the high reputation which the world, as if by common consent, has agreed to allow him. But he had many friends among persons in high life; he had a mild and pliant disposition, and his talents were not brilliant enough to excite envy; he had just enough of talent to please, and this is the kind of ability which commands universal success. His translation of the Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard is vastly inferior to the original of Pope; it even contains some absurd lines, such as these:—

> "Quoi! faudra-t-il toujours aimer, se repentir,
> Désirer, espérer, désespérer, sentir," etc.

This translation, in general, is remarkable for harmonious versification; but we have had since a thousand pieces in verse which are as good as this, and which are forgotten. Colardeau was mild in his manners in company, but his conversation was commonplace; he was sombre, and somewhat dull. The day of the week on which I dined with my aunt, or my grandmother, Madame de Montesson took me to pay visits in the evening to the Princesses de Chimay; the one who was afterward maid of honor to the queen was still handsome, and an angel in point of mildness and character; we also visited the Duchess of Mazarin, Madame de Gourgue, the Marchioness de Livri, the Duchess of Chaulnes, and the

Countess de la Massais, a lady of great wit and amiability; our day always finished by going to sup with one of the three last named ladies, or with Madame de la Reynière, the wife of the farmer-general. She was a person thirty-five years old, full of vapors, extremely annoyed at not having married a courtier, but handsome, obliging and polite; always complaining of her health, but never complaining of any person, and doing the honors of her house with great liberality and grace. My aunt, though she was always very well received by this lady, was not by any means fond of her; and I perceived that almost all the ladies of the court, about her own age, who went to Madame de la Reynière's, endeavored to make her appear ridiculous; I tried to discover the reason of this, and though as yet I had so little experience, I found it out. All these ladies were, in their hearts, envious of the beauty of Madame de la Reynière, of the extreme magnificence of her establishment, and of the elegant splendor of her toilette. This discovery grieved my heart and led me to make melancholy reflections on the conduct of the world. Madame de la Reynière saw the best company; she had a very intimate friend, the Countess of Melfort, a very handsome person, by whom she was esteemed. She was also in habits of strict friendship with the Marchioness of Tessé: the latter, who is still alive, has some wit but knows it too well, and is too fond of showing it; and in order to give her hearers a higher opinion of it, she speaks a language peculiar to herself which, to understand, sometimes requires an interpreter; she, and the younger Madame

d'Egmont, are the last of the race of affectedly nice ladies, whom I have seen in the great world; affected airs and patches were already out of fashion among women of my age. M. de Tessé was the coldest and most taciturn person I have ever met with. He built a fine château at Cheville, between Paris and Versailles; and a few years after the period to which I allude, he wore constantly a snuff-box, decorated with a miniature, representing the château at Cheville; beneath which was this verse from the tragedy of Phèdre:—

"Je lui Bâtis un temple ut pris soin de l'orner;"

—which signified that he had built Cheville for Madame de Tessé; thus comparing himself to Phaedra, agitated with the transports of love, and Madame de Tessé, who was forty, and who was anything but handsome, to Venus, *toute entière à sa proie attachée.* This inscription excited much laughter, especially from its being chosen by M. de Tessé, a man of fifty, who certainly had never been in love. As for M. de la Reynière, he was an excellent man, who loved talent and the arts, kept an elegant establishment, and gave the best suppers in Paris; but he had some oddities, which, however, have been greatly exaggerated. Of all the persons to whom my aunt introduced me, those to whose houses I liked best to go were Madame de la Raynière and Madame de la Massais; I commenced a friendship with them, which lasted till my removal to Belle Chasse. I met at Madame de la Reynière's several very agreeable men. One was the Abbé Arnauld, whose Provençal accent,

open air, his vivacity, and his gayety, rendered his conversation very amusing and gave a natural tone to all he said, though he had a good deal of affectation in his language as well as his writings; but he had many excellent qualities, a great equality of temper, and an inviolable secrecy as to all that passed in society; but he was violent in his enmities, and wrote the most bitter epigrams against his enemies. The Count d'Albaret was also a particular friend of Madame de la Reynière. Madame Necker, in her Souvenirs, has most unjustly ridiculed him; in the first place, because he had nothing ridiculous about him; he was good-humored, pleasant, witty, and had a great number of agreeable accomplishments; he loved the arts passionately, and was a good judge of them; he was extremely gay; he was a person who seemed always determined to amuse himself, and to please his friends, and succeeded, by means of his talents, his good temper, and his great complaisance in society; but his complaisance never went further than it ought. He had the happiest possible disposition, both for himself and others; he never sought the acquaintance of any persons but those whose company was agreeable to him; his gayety of humor never led him to say anything malignant; and he never committed a mean action. He was a person of fortune, and gave at his own house little concerts, which were delicious; he received none but the best company; his morals were perfectly pure. This was styled a frivolous kind of existence; as for me, I think it far happier and more amiable than a life devoted to the acquisition of wealth, or the intrigues of ambition.

I saw this year, (1766), the Abbé Delille, who had just published his beautiful translation of the Aeneid. I thought him ingenuous and amiable; he had a face of a certain intelligent ugliness, which it was amusing to examine; at this time he recited verses in a manner that was quite charming, and which belonged exclusively to himself. I was very intimate with Madame de Louvois, who introduced me to her sister, Madame de Custines.

The conduct of Madame de Logny, widow of one of the richest financiers, had been marked with something even worse than levity; and the scandal which ensued appeared to have been a lesson to her two daughters, who both became two perfectly virtuous and irreproachable women; the eldest, who married M. de Louvois, was the smallest woman I ever saw; but she had a beautiful shape, delicate little hands, a fine complexion, a pretty face, and an infantine air, which rendered this little person quite charming.

M. and Madame de Louvois lived with Madame de Logny; this was even made one of the conditions of the marriage; as Madame de Logny would not consent to be separated from her beloved daughter, whom she loved far more than the other, who afterward married M. de Custines. M. de Louvois conducted himself in somewhat of a levity towards his mother-in-law; Madame de Logny was offended and displeased with her daughter, because she did not partake her resentment. Madame de Louvois adored her husband; but this tenderness was so unworthily returned, that it may almost be regarded as weakness on her part; but it was the duty of a

mother to respect it, and Madame de Logny did not. In her malice against her son-in-law, she showed so little sense and principle, as to acquaint her daughter with the infidelities and the licentious conduct of her husband. By this unworthy behavior, she entirely lost the confidence of Madame de Louvois, whom she thus afflicted with a misfortune which she could not remedy. The reciprocal dislike augmented; annoyances of all kinds, and treacherous explanations multiplied daily. At length, one day, when Madame de Logny was gone to dine in the country, M. de Louvois, who had secretly hired a house, quitted that of his mother-in-law, without giving her any notice of it; he removed all his furniture in a few hours, and carried his wife along with him. This rude and extraordinary behavior carried the rage and resentment of Madame de Logny to its height. In vain did Madame de Louvois write the most submissive letters to her mother, or waited upon her at her house; her letters were sent back unopened, and her mother's door remained shut against her. Madame de Logny sent word that she would never either pardon her, or see her face again; and unfortunately she kept her threat. She resisted with an extravagant and barbarous firmness all the representations of her friends, and the tears and supplications of Mademoiselle de Logny, who interceded with ardor and perseverance for her unfortunate sister. But Madame de Logny became the victim of her own harshness, and suffered a change of health, which soon became a very dangerous chronic disease. In proportion as her strength decreased, her resentment seemed to

augment, or rather, her unnatural hate appeared to be destroying in her the principles of life. Can an implacable mother exist? When her end approached, those about her mentioned the name of Madame de Louvois; she desired them to be silent. They endeavored but fruitlessly to awaken in her breast some sentiments of religion. The curate of the parish came without being sent for; he spoke to her of the sacraments, but she replied not a word. At last he pronounced the name of Madame de Louvois, and Madame de Logny said in a terrible voice, "Leave my house, Sir!" He withdrew and remained in a closet adjoining the bed-room. Mademoiselle de Logny had brought her sister secretly into the house, and had her concealed from her mother's view. At what she thought a favorable moment, she threw herself on her knees at her mother's bed-side, and bathed in tears, she implored her sister's pardon. "Hold your tongue!" was the only reply she obtained. Madame de Louvois passed four days and four nights on a rush-bottomed chair, in her cruel mother's antechamber. Madame de Logny admitted no one into her room but Périgny and her youngest daughter. The latter collected from several words that dropped from her mother that she meditated a vengeance which would survive her. The fifth day Madame de Logny who was at her last extremity, though still perfectly sensible, sent for her notary, and was shut up with him more than two hours; during this time, Mademoiselle de Logny requested a private interview with Périgny, and addressed him thus: "You, Sir, are the person whom I esteem the

most in the world; and I wish to open my heart to you. I have no knowledge of business; but I know there are means of eluding the laws, and that by employing them my mother can disinherit my sister, which I believe to be her design. My intentions are good; but I am only seventeen; at that age I may draw back, or follow bad advice; I therefore wish to bind myself to my resolution by an irrevocable vow. I beg you, Sir, whom I revere as a father, to receive the word of honor which I here solemnly pledge you, to give up to my sister, if she is disinherited, not merely a part of my mother's property but the entire half, which is her right. Now, (added she) I am easy upon this point; it is now impossible for me to fail in my duty." Périgny was deeply touched by this conduct, but what struck him most in the behavior of the young person, who had all her life been remarkable for decision of character, was the modest and virtuous distrust of herself, and the precaution which she thought it necessary to take, of binding herself so as to render herself incapable of changing her determination. This trait of character is, indeed, admirable, and proves the soul of an angel, and a virtue truly worthy of a Christian. On the evening of the same day, Mademoiselle de Logny and the president made a last effort in favor of Madame de Louvois; they ventured to declare that she had been in the antechamber for the last five days; upon this Madame de Logny, raising her voice, pronounced in fury these terrible words: "I curse her!" Her unhappy daughter, placed against the half open door of her room, heard

them and fainted. After this last effort of unnatural hatred, Madame de Logny fell into a long and terrible agony, and died at the break of day. If she had had any sense of religion, and had received the sacraments, she would have opened her arms to her daughter, and, in spite of her inconceivable hardness of heart, she would have pardoned her! . . . . On her death Mademoiselle de Logny went into the convent of Pantemont.

By her will, Madame de Logny gave to the President de Périgny all her fortune (about one hundred thousand francs a year), her lands, revenues, furniture, diamonds, in short, all she possessed. M. de Périgny accepted the trust, and, agreeably to the intention of the testatrix, he gave up the whole fortune to Mademoiselle de Logny, who divided it with her sister, so scrupulously, that in sharing the plate, she broke in two a silver-gilt spoon, which had not a fellow, in order to send one half of it to Madame de Louvois. The latter died without children two or three years afterward, and her whole fortune returned to the pure and generous hands which bestowed it. Mademoiselle de Logny, a year after her mother's death, married the Count de Custines. No young person ever entered into life with a more enviable reputation, or was received in a manner more distinguished, and more flattering. Her conduct towards her sister, of which Périgny had published all the details, excited the well-founded admiration of every one, and inspired me with the greatest anxiety to become acquainted with her. She was a very handsome woman, with a countenance imposing and somewhat severe; but her features

were perfectly regular. She was tall; all her features were handsome, especially her eyes, which, for size, form, and expression, were quite admirable. I threw myself on her neck with a naïveté which touched her extremely. From this time I date the friendship we conceived for each other, and which lasted till the death of this admirable woman. At her house, I met a young lady of our own age, who became my friend, and whose friendship I have had the good fortune to preserve. This was the Countess d'Harville; she had a pretty face, she was intelligent, mild, and lively; I never knew any one more sincere, or whose company was more agreeable. At my own house, also, I saw the Marchioness de Bréhant, a perfect beauty in miniature: she was extremely little. I sometimes visited the Marchioness of Roncé, an old friend of the late Princess of Condé; she had a party every Saturday, where there was conversation and music; I played on the harp there several times. At her house I met M. de Chamfort, who had already published his "Young Indian Girl"; he had a handsome face, and was a great coxcomb. At Madame de Boulainvilliers' I became acquainted with another poet, Lemierre, who was an excellent man; he read his own tragedies with ridiculous vehemence, but he had a great deal of talent and right feeling. He was surprisingly ugly, but his ugliness was not revolting; he had a high opinion of his own merit, and he showed it frankly and without any arrogance. It was rather an opinion than a pretention, and as he did not seem to be offensively vain of it, every one took it in good part. I supped from time to time with

the Marchioness of Créné, with the young Duchess of Liancourt, and the Marchioness of Beuvron; we dined or supped once a week with Madame Puisieux, and once or twice a month with the Marchioness d'Etrée; but the persons whom I loved most to see were Madame de Balincour, Madame de Custines, and Madame d'Harville.

I was now enceinte of Madame de Valence, who was born, (as well as my first child) in the Cul-de-sac St. Dominique. After my accouchement, I experienced a real fright. As soon as the infant was examined I remarked on the features of M. de Genlis and all the other persons who were in the room, an air of consternation, which led me to fancy that I had brought a deformed child into the world; at the same time I heard a mysterious whispering, which confirmed my fears. I interrogated every one so anxiously, that they were at last obliged to answer me. M. de Genlis, with a visage of preparation which made me shudder, told me that my poor little girl was in fact born with a deformity; but he advised me to be tranquil, and that next day I should know all. I was by no means disposed to be tranquil; but burst into tears, crying, that I insisted on seeing my infant, to bless it, and love it all alone were it even a carp. M. de Genlis scolded me, for what he called my unbridled imaginations, and at last they brought me the monster, which turned out such a charming young woman, and showed me below her chin a strawberry in half relief, very red, and marked with little spots, like that fruit; of the same shape, and exactly resembling a beautiful garden-strawberry. On discovering that this was

all, my joy was unbounded; I thought, and I said, that such a singular mark was even very pretty, and that I hoped it would not wear off; but M. de Genlis, vexed about this poor strawberry, tried all imaginable means of flattening and removing it, and at last succeeded in effacing the mark entirely.

As soon as I was recovered from my confinement, I went in the spring to Isle-Adam, where the Prince of Conti resided. I had already come out, as the phrase is, but I had never been at the Isle-Adam, and for a young person this was a kind of first appearance. The Countess de Boufflers, and the Maréchale de Luxembourg, both remarkable for the excellent taste of their style and manners, and intimate friends of the Prince of Conti, passed all the fine part of the year at the Isle-Adam; and there, as well as at Paris, they reigned the supreme judges of all who appeared in the great world. I had never visited these ladies; I had only met them in company, and was merely known to them by sight. Up to this time, I had spoken but little in company; I reserved all my conversation for my intimate friends; my face and my harp alone were the themes of eulogy; for my reserve and timidity led people to judge unfavorably of my understanding. When my aunt was interrogated on the subject, she used merely to reply, that I was a good creature, and as naïve as Madame de D—— This was a person thirty-five years old, and famous for retaining at that age all the childishness of manner which she had at fifteen; which was very properly considered the rarest example of folly ever exhibited in fashionable

life. It was my aunt who took me to the Isle-Adam. The very first day, Mesdames de Luxembourg and De Boufflers made her some questions about my talents. My aunt made her usual answer. "That is singular," said the maréchale, "for she is an exception to the proverb, which says, that round faces have no character in them; there is a great deal of quick meaning in hers." The maréchale de Luxembourg had made amends for all the errors of her youth, by her sincere devotion, and by the excellent education she had bestowed upon her granddaughter, the Duchess de Lauzun, a young person of eighteen, of a truly angelic disposition. The maréchale had read little, but she had a fine natural understanding, remarkable for quickness, delicacy and grace. She attached too much importance to elegance of language, to manners and to the knowledge of the habits of high life. She decided irrevocably upon an expression which was in bad taste; and, strange to say, this frivolous manner of judging almost always turned out to be just. But she applied this test only to persons who lived much in the society of the capital, and not to people from the country, or to foreigners. "A person," said she, "who has opportunities of seeing what is elegant, and what is not, and adopts any mode contrary to the tone of good society, must be destitute of taste, tact and delicacy." She affected to have discovered in the usages of high life, as they then existed, an admirable mixture of cleverness and good sense; and indeed, when any one questioned her on that subject, she had always a ready reply, which was equally ingenious and

witty. Her disapprobation, never expressed otherwise than by a laconic kind of mockery, was a sentence from which there was no appeal. Any one, on whom it was inflicted, lost generally that sort of personal respect, which caused his company to be thought desirable in society or which procured him an invitation to the charming petit soupers, which only persons remarkable for their agreeable talents, and their fashion, were admitted. This sort of consideration was, at that time, very desirable and much sort after.

The maréchale's censures were not always levelled at frivolous things; she condemned, with equal rigor, anything insolent or dogmatic in the tone, all presumptuous confidence, and everything which discovered in conversation either coxcombry or ill-feeling. The maréchale was truly the instructress of all the youth of the court, and persons belonging to the court, in turn, placed a high value on rendering themselves agreeable to her. I made a study of all she said; she showed an attachment to me, and allowed me to interrogate her about things of which I was ignorant, and especially on the habits of high life, of which she had studied the spirit; this assisted me much in the composition of a work which I have now in my portfolio, entitled—"The Spirit of the Usages and Etiquettes of the Eighteenth Century." I intend to give it another form, and to publish it as a dictionary.

The Countess de Boufflers, an old and intimate friend of the Prince of Conti, and who had preserved a prodigious influence over him, was one of the most amiable

persons I have ever known ; she had a love of paradoxes, which disposed her to perpetually maintain the most singular and extravagant opinions; she was, perhaps, too great an enemy of commonplaces. This aversion to ordinary themes, which was joined in her to a great deal of wit, rendered her conversation extremely piquant, but gave her the reputation, very erroneously, of judging ill; her talk was highly amusing and agreeable. She loved to show others off to the best advantage, and she did this in a natural and graceful manner, which was altogether peculiar to herself. The Countess Amelia, her daughter-in-law, to whom she was passionately attached, then seventeen years old, had nothing remarkable about her. Her mother-in-law repeated bon mots, which she attributed to her, but which she alone had heard ; however, since the death of Madame de Boufflers no one else has cited any.

There resided constantly at the Isle-Adam a very amiable old man, M. du Pont-de-Vesle. Every evening after supper, the Prince of Conti requested him to sing impromptus upon all the young ladies who were at table. He sang these couplets in blank verse. There were, in these couplets, gallantry without insipidity, and infinite grace ; but this practice was embarrassing for the ladies; it was difficult to preserve an easy air during these eulogies, though they had in them a little touch of the epigrammatic.

M. de Conti was the only one among the princes of the blood who had a taste for literature and the sciences, or who could speak in public. His face, person, and

manners, were imposing; no man could say obliging things with more delicacy and grace; and in spite of his successes among the women, there was not, in his manner, the slightest trace of coxcombry. He was, moreover, the most magnificent of our princes; at his house, you felt as if you were in your own. At the Isle-Adam, each lady had a carriage and horses at her command; and not being obliged to go down into the saloon, till an hour before supper, she was at liberty to ask parties to dinner daily in her own apartments. As the prince did not dine, he wished to save the ladies the trouble of going down into the dining-room and sitting at table where a hundred other persons dined. Ceremony was reserved for the evening; but during the day you enjoyed perfect liberty, and all the charms of private society. What a pity, that so amiable a prince should have had the singular passion of affecting sometimes an air of despotism and harshness, which, by no means belonged to his disposition! I shall here mention an instance, of which I was witness one day, as we quitted our room to go into a neighboring one, to hear mass celebrated. M. de Chabriant stopped the Prince of Conti, to request his orders relative to a poacher, who had just been apprehended. At this question, the Prince of Conti, raising his voice very high, replied coldly, "A hundred blows, and three months' imprisonment;" and then pursued his way with the most tranquil air possible. Such coldness, joined to such cruelty, made me shudder. In the afternoon, meeting with M. de Chabriant, I could not refrain from mentioning the poor poacher, and the

barbarous sentence pronounced by the prince. "Oh!" said M. de Chabriant, laughing, "this was only addressed to the audience. I know him well; none of his tyrannical orders, given in public, are ever executed; as for the poacher, for whom you are so much interested, he will merely be banished from the Isle-Adam for two months; and, during that time monseigneur will secretly take care of his family, which is very numerous. Such were the orders he gave me on leaving mass." "What!" rejoined I; "is it not then a first emotion of anger, which makes him pronounce such odious sentences?" "No," he replied, "it is merely done for effect; he wishes, from time to time, to appear formidable and terrible."

The Prince of Conti has been too much praised for what was then called his firmness. Such an eulogy must have been highly flattering to a prince of the house of Bourbon; it is the only praise (since the time of the regency) which flattery could not venture on; and, in order to merit it, the Prince of Conti affected the tyrant, while his heart overflowed with sentiments of humanity.

The Prince of Conti had an imposing exterior, a handsome and majestic expression of face, and a great deal of talent; but I could never accustom myself to his manner, nor get rid of the embarrassment with which his presence affected me; he had something scrutinizing in his air, which disconcerted me. Notwithstanding that he had been prejudiced in my favor by Mesdames de Luxembourg and De Boufflers, he thought me but a very middling person; and when M. de Donézan told him that I acted proverbs in an extraordinary style, he re-

fused to believe it. It was afterward determined that we should act proverbs. A little portable stage was erected in the dining-room, and we played "The Cobbler" and "The Financier"; there were but three persons, the financier, the cobbler, and his wife; I played the latter, and M. Donézan, the cobbler, in a style of perfection which was quite inimitable. My aunt had never seen me act proverbs, for I had only played once with M. Donézan at Madame de la Reynière's, and in the presence of not more than four or five persons. We were prodigiously applauded; the silent timidity, which I had hitherto manifested, gave my success the air of a miracle; in the last scene, I excited both the tears and the laughter of my auditory: the prince's surprise was extreme. He made M. de Genlis promise to have my portrait painted in my costume of the cobbler's wife holding up my apron full of onions. I was so painted; but I do not know what afterward became of the picture. We were made to perform this little piece four days successively. The Maréchale and Madame de Boufflers were delighted upon this occasion; they seemed to triumph in my success, and repeated continually, that in order to play so well, from my own ideas of the part, I must have prodigious ingenuity and talent; what the part principally wants is a feeling of nature. The Prince of Conti tried anew to converse with me, but in vain; my embarrassment in his company was invincible. All the women, and particularly my aunt, insisted also upon acting proverbs, and asked M. Donézan to give them lessons; but he assured them that he had never given

me any, and that I had played the part from the first as I represented it in public.

Several proverbs were rehearsed. Madame de Montesson and Madame de Sabran (lady of honor to the Princess of Conti) chose parts in them, and played not even tolerably, but in the most absurd and ridiculous manner. They felt this and their vexation was extreme. Madame de Sabran showed hers like an infant; after the play she cried with vexation. This scene surprised and confounded me. Madame de Sabran, who had hitherto shown me much good-will, from this time became my enemy. I have had many since from as frivolous a cause. The proverbs were stopped to the great regret of the Prince of Conti, the maréchale, Madame de Boufflers, and Monsieur de Donézan. We acted comedies, in which I had only two significant parts—that of a lover in the Improm pt de Campagne, and Isabella in the Plaideurs. But in order to hear me sing and play the harp, M. du Pont-de-Vesle wrote a little piece called the Nuptials of Isabella, in which I played a sonata for the harp, and sang several pretty verses.

Madame de Montesson, in my opinion, played very ill in comedy, because in that, as in every thing else, she wanted natural feeling. But she had a great deal of dexterity, and the sort of talent that a country actress possesses, who has succeeded, from her age to play the principal parts, though she plays them only by rote. The count, afterwards Duke of Guignes, was of this party; he passed for being one of the most brilliant and agreeable persons about the court; there was nothing

remarkable about his person, but an extraordinary affectation of nicety about his hair, and magnificence in his dress. All his reputation for wit was founded on a sort of espionage, which he exercised over all little matters, that were either ridiculous or in bad taste; these he characterized in a few words, and in a very pleasant manner denounced them to Madame de Luxembourg, and sneered at them in a very piquant way with her and Madame de Boufflers. But this kind of mockery never fell upon reputations, but only upon trifling follies. The Duke of Guignes had some agreeable accomplishments; he was a good musician, and played well upon the flute. Another gentleman of this period, who was a great favorite among the women, was the Count de Chabot; he was neither handsome nor very young; he never spoke loud, but he stammered—a defect which in him seemed a grace; he practised a kind of mysterious gallantry, only expressed by a few piquant words, always whispered in an undertone. It was, however, somewhat common, being addressed to almost all the young ladies; but it did not appear so, because it was always confided, as it were, in a whisper to the ear, and with an air of feeling and truth which had something very seducing in it. His brother, the Count de Jarnac, was the most polished gentleman of the court; he had a passion for the fine arts, and was very magnificent; his manners were noble, and his face rather handsome, but he wanted grace. I met again, at the Isle-Adam, with great pleasure, the Countess de Coigny, formerly Mademoiselle de Roissy, with whom I had been very intimate at the convent of

the Précieux Sang. She was somewhat singular in her manners, but she had much talent and good feeling; we renewed our acquaintance and she told me that she was fond of studying anatomy—a strange taste for a young female of eighteen. As I had studied medicine and surgery a little, Madame de Coigny loved to converse with me. I promised to go through a course of anatomy, but not like her on dead human bodies. The celebrated Mademoiselle de Biron, who lived at the Estrepade, near the Cul-de-sac Saint Dominique, was the first who invented entire anatomical subjects, made up of wax and rags; she executed them with astonishing perfection; and it was at her house that I began, and continued at different times, a course of anatomy. She modeled her imitations upon corpses which she kept in a glass-cabinet in the middle of the garden. I never ventured to enter this cabinet, which was her favorite spot, and which she called her little boudoir.

The younger Countess of Egmont, daughter of the Marshal de Richelieu, at whose house I had supped several times with Madame de Montesson, came this year to the Isle-Adam; she had still a charming face notwithstanding her ill health; she was then but twenty-eight, or twenty nine, and had the prettiest features I have ever seen. She gave herself far too many airs of face; but all her airs were graceful. Her understanding was like her face, full of mannerism but elegant withal. I am of the opinion that Madame d'Egmont was only singular and not affected; her manner was natural to her. She had formed many violent attachments, and

she has been reproached with a romantic passion which continued long; but her conduct has always been pure. The women did not love her; they envied the seducing charms of her face, and rendered no justice to her goodness and mildness of disposition; and as she was open to reprehension in many respects, she was not spared in anything in which she could be blamed. I have never seen any one made the subject of so many little mockeries as she was; but this neither prevented me from seeking her acquaintance nor from loving her society, nor from thinking her charming. The last time my aunt and I supped with her, before going to the Isle-Adam, M. de Lusignan, who was called Thick-head, was present. M. de Lusignan was not quite destitute of understanding, but he never reflected a moment, and had a habit of openly saying whatever was uppermost in his imagination. As he was not malignant, this characteristic was overlooked in favor of the air of originality it gave him. At the supper I allude to, when we seated at table in the dining-room, his eyes fixed upon a large picture opposite him, which represented a very beautiful woman in a sitting posture, with the air of one occupied with melancholy thoughts. He interrogated M. d'Egmont as to the subject of the picture; and M. d'Egmont replied, that the melancholy figure was that of one of his ancestors, the wife of a Count of Egmont, who, having discovered her infidelity to him, cut off her head. "My God! madame," cried M. de Lusignan, addressing himself to Madame d'Egmont, "does not such an example frighten you? . . . but" (added he) "thank heaven

the Egmonts of the present day are not so ferocious." During these interesting remarks, all the company looked at each other, Madame d'Egmont pretended to laugh, and the subject was speedily changed. My aunt related this scene to several persons, through whom it reached the ears of Madame d'Egmont, who was told that it was I who had told the story. When Madame d'Egmont came to the Isle-Adam, I was extremely surprised to find her very cold in her manner with me; I was told that she said, that notwithstanding my mild and timid air, I was very malicious; I begged my aunt to ask her why she had taken up this opinion of me after having shown me so much friendship. My aunt called upon her one morning, and Madame d'Egmont told her what had been reported to her; upon this my aunt did what was highly honorable to her—she confessed herself to be the person to blame. I cannot doubt of this handsome conduct on the part of my aunt, for from this time Madame d'Egmont was particularly attentive to me on all occasions, and I remarked that she was very cold with Madame de Montesson—to whom she has ever since borne a dislike.

We remained six weeks at the Isle-Adam; afterward I passed a few days at Paris, and then I went with my aunt to Villers-Coterets, for the first. We had studied parts, in order to play acts there, and even to perform operas. We played "Vertumnus" and "Pomona." I performed Vertumnus, who takes the shape of a woman and my aunt played Pomona; she dressed for the part in a gown decorated with apples and other fruits;

Madame d'Egmont said she looked like a walking greenhouse. The dress was heavy and my aunt was short, and her shape far from handsome; her voice, too, was far too weak for taking a part in an opera; she failed completely in this one. The Marquis of Clermont, afterward ambassador to Naples, played the god Pan very well. My success in "Vertumnus" was unbounded. We had all the opera dancers in our ballets, the piece was to have been presented three times, but was played only once; as well as the "Isle Sornante," a comic opera, of which the words were by Collé, and the music by Monsigny. I played a sultana, and the scene opened with a grand air, which I sang, accompanying myself on the harp. Monsigny wrote the part and the air on purpose for me. I wore a splendid dress, dazzling with gold and jewels; when the curtain drew up, I had three rounds of applause, and my air had a double encore. It was impossible for me not to perceive, after the performance, that my aunt was in very ill humor. We acted "Rose" and "Colas"; my aunt, who was thirty, performed Rose, and I the part of the old mother Robi. We played, besides, "The Deserter," in which Madame de Montesson had the best part; I played that of the young girl; the Countess de Blot, who had been maid of honor to the late Duchess of Orleans, and who was then thirty-four, played the principal parts in "The Misanthrope" and the "Legacy," and with the greatest success. She really had infinite grace, and the talent of playing very cleverly. The Count de Pont performed the part of the Misanthrope to perfection, without imita-

ting any actor of the Theâtre Français; he had a real talent for acting, and an air of nobility in his manners and behavior, which no actor by profession can have. M. de Vandreuil was much in fashion; his talents were not very considerable, but his manners were of the highest elegance. Madame d'Hénin said, that the only two persons who could talk to women were Le Kain on the stage, and M. de Vandreuil in a saloon. The latter had a number of pretty little talents, middling enough, but agreeable in company. He sang a little, danced tolerably, and appeared to love all the fine arts; even if this were no more than pretence, it is useful to the arts and creditable to the amateur. He was gentle and polite in his manners; no one dreaded his malignity; all loved his society.

The celebrated comic actor, Grandval, superintended the repetition of our parts, and even acted with us. The Duke of Orleans played very broadly the part of a peasant. I met at our rehearsals Collé and Sedaine, neither of whom were amiable persons. Carmontel, the reader of the Duke of Orleans, entered the room always after dinner, with a large book, in which he put the portraits of all the persons who arrived at Villers-Coterets; all these portraits were in profile, and somewhat caricatured; but they were like the originals, and formed a curious collection. He gave us only one sitting; I was represented as very ugly, and in the attitude of playing on the harp; I had a small forehead which he drew a great deal too large and thus took away all resemblance. The Duke of Orleans wished to see me act proverbs with Carmontel,

who played to perfection the part of a brutal or ill-tempered husband; these he played with inimitable nature and spirit but he could play nothing else. M. de Donézan and M. d'Albaret acted with us; my aunt refused to play, but we excited such an enthusiasm, that we agreed to act every evening. My aunt, towards the end of our stay here, met with a signal and brilliant success. This history is sufficiently singular to deserve a full narration of all the particulars.

From the time of my marriage, my aunt had shown great friendship for me; and I, in my turn, had become so much attached to her, that I no longer preserved any of my old recollections of her conduct, or the dislike I had once felt for her. I ascribed her harshness towards my mother, partly to her levity of character, and partly to the avarice which I could not fail to discover, and which was, in fact, her ruling passion; indeed, I saw no other fault in her; she had a very even temper, and some gayety; I thought her candid and feeling, and she seemed extremely fond of me. I was convinced that she had the utmost confidence in me, and I was profoundly attached to her; she told me that the Duke of Orleans was in love with her, and that he was jealous of the Count de Guines. Madame de Montesson had not pretended to disavow this mutual attachment, but she protested it had always been platonic, and that the sentiments she felt could only be altered by the change of those of the Count de Guines. She told me all these matters, as well as the Duke of Orleans, and I believed them as he did. I forgot to say that before we left the

Isle-Adam, the Duke of Orleans had come to pass seven or eight days there; during this time, the Count de Guines seemed to be entirely occupied with the Countess Amelie de Boufflers; my aunt pointed this out to me, adding that she was dying of grief at the sight. I suggested to her mildly, that she should do all in her power to triumph over a passion, which was always blamable, notwithstanding the purity of her behavior, especially as she was married as well as the count. M. de Montesson was eighty, but the Countess de Guines was young. My aunt talked exceedingly well about virtue; I even thought I discovered in her some sentiments of religion; she lamented her weakness, and I pitied her sincerely, supposing her to be in a state of mind the most distressing possible. As for the Duke of Orleans, she told me she felt for him only a tender friendship, and that she did all in her power to cure him of an unhappy passion. I confess I did not believe this, for the contrary was quite evident; but I ascribed her conduct with the duke to her natural coquetry, and I never suspected her of any ambitious design. Monsigny, one of the best men I have ever known, and who had a great deal of natural talent, became quite transported with my voice and my harp, and came every day to have some music with me in my room. I acquired a friendship for him; we talked while we played; he related to me a great many curious things, and, among others, one that surprised me. It was, that my aunt had privately requested him, as well as Sedaine, to give her acting eulogies only at the rehearsals, (at which the Duke of Orleans was al-

ways present,) and to reserve his advice and instructions for her private ear; she said that this would encourage her. Monsigny and Sedaine judged that this was a contrivance to exalt her in the eyes of the Duke of Orleans; and, in this respect, they seconded her admirably, for they were truly prodigal of their eulogies. This contrivance succeeded perfectly; the Duke of Orleans was convinced that her talents were miraculous. This very weak prince, who was by no means endowed with the decision and talent of Henry the Great, never judged for himself; he saw everything with the eyes of others. All the old female friends of the Duke of Orleans, without being at all fond of Madame de Montesson, entered perfectly into her views, for each had a private interest in doing so. The constancy of the Duke of Orleans, for several years, to a courtesan, called Marquise, (afterward styled Madame de Villemonble,) had completely withdrawn the prince from the enjoyment of the best female society; Mesdames de Ségur, (the mother and daughter-in-law,) Mesdames de Beauvau, De Grammont, De Luxembourg, thus lost all the pleasure which the intimate society of princes always affords. For a long time, these ladies never went to Villers-Coterets; there Marquise reigned; and the Duke of Orleans never invited any but men. We owed the brilliant party, which was then at Villers-Coterets, to Madame de Montesson; for this reason all the ladies wished that my aunt should succeed in inspiring the prince with a vivid passion; it was far more desirable to them that the mistress of the prince should be a person of rank than a courtesan, for, in the former case, they

could again enjoy his society. I do not know whether they were penetrating enough to discover that my aunt, instead of consenting to be the prince's mistress, aspired to be his wife. But, even in this case, the latter event could not be disagreeable to them; on the contrary, all the women of quality must have been flattered by it, as it gave them hopes of an alliance to royalty.

My aunt, who, as I have already mentioned, wished to finish her residence here with something brilliant, bethought herself of a singular idea. She thought that the Duke of Orleans had a high admiration of her accomplishments, but he could not have the same opinion of her talents; she wished suddenly to acquire a reputation for the latter, which should eclipse that of Mesdames de Boufflers, De Beauvau and De Grammont. But how was this to be accomplished? My aunt was extremely ignorant, and during her whole life had read nothing whatever, except a few romances. She spelt very badly, and wrote letters very ill. Yet she took it into her head to become an author; and being incapable of invention herself, she resolved to dramatize Maurivaux's novel of "Mariane;" the numerous dialogues in that work furnished her with a great many scenes ready made; and, besides, the subject pleased her,—"Love triumphing over the prejudices of high birth, and placing both ranks on a level." But my aunt was not unaware, that, by producing the work under her own name, she would have to combat pretentions, of which no interest can persuade the abandonment; and that the women who had so long passed by general consent, for the most

ingenious and brilliant persons in society, would not easily give up their places to her. My aunt extricated herself from this difficulty in the most ingenious manner I have ever known. She wrote the piece in prose and in five acts; it was a performance below mediocrity, without being very absurd, in which there were some pretty phrases, and several agreeable conversation-scenes, literally copied from Maurivaux's novel. She told no one of this work but the Duke of Orleans; she concealed it from me as well as from everybody else. When the piece was finished, she read it tête-à-tête with the Duke of Orleans, and though he was no great judge of the matter, assured her that he thought it charming. "Well," said my aunt, "I give it to you; I shall enjoy your success more than my own; and, besides, I don't wish that any one should know that I am the author of the piece. Read the comedy as if it were your own, and if it succeeds, do not declare me the author; let it be always thought to be written by you, and we will perform it at our last representation." The Duke of Orleans was moved, even to tears, by this generosity, but would not profit by it, until, at her earnest entreaties, he consented. I learnt, in the sequel, all this detail from himself. The Duke of Orleans avowed then, that he had written a comedy, which avowal produced no small degree of surprise, in which Madame de Montesson appeared to join, persuading all the world that she was ignorant of it, and expressing with great naïveté, much anxiety respecting the work. Every one asked, in secret, how the duke had been able to write a comedy, and it was generally

thought that Collé, perhaps, had formed the plot of it, and corrected the language. Nobody, however, exhibited any suspicion as to the real author. The Duke of Orleans announced that he would have the play read; the day was named, and every one, both male and female invited, who passed in society for persons of wit—the curiosity was extreme. At length the wished-for day arrived. I was admitted to the reading, but not without some difficulty, my aunt not caring that I should be there. We were then assembled, quite determined, beforehand, to find the work excellent, unless it should be quite detestable and ridiculous. The success was complete. Never was the reading of one of Moliere's plays productive of equal éclat—all were in ecstasies. Every scene was greeted with plaudits the most exaggerated, and nothing heard but acclamations. In the midst of this enthusiasm, I kept a modest silence, but I observed, and assuredly nothing could be more curious. When the reading was finished, all the company hastened to surround the duke; several ladies, quite beside themselves, asked permission to embrace him; all spoke at once; nothing could be heard, at least, nothing distinguished, except these phrases, a thousand times repeated, "ravishing—sublime—perfect!" My aunt, pale, and red by turns, and weeping, expressed herself in no other way than by her emotion and tears. Suddenly, the Duke of Orleans demanded, in a tone the most expressive, a moment's silence. All were immediately quiet; when with a voice agitated, but very resolute, he uttered these words: "In spite of my promise, I can no

longer usurp so much glory—This fine work is not mine; its author is Madame de Montesson." Upon this, my aunt cried, with a languishing voice, "Ah, Monseigneur!" She could say no more; her modesty overwhelmed her, and she sank, almost fainting into a chair. All the assembly was petrified; it is impossible to give an idea of the effect of this *coup de théâtre* and of the change which became visible in almost every face. The vexation of many ladies was very perceptible; but the evil was without remedy; there was no retracting these commendations, bestowed with so much exaggeration; they could not but persevere in their extravagant flattery, and continued to assert, that the comedy of Mariane was a *chef-d'œuvre*. This triumph sufficed to complete the enthusiasm of the Duke of Orleans for my aunt, who from this time he regarded as a prodigy of talent. I was deeply hurt that my aunt had kept this secret from me, and with so much duplicity; this distrust convinced me, to what extent I might calculate on her friendship. I did not show her all the chagrin I felt on the subject; I made some complaint, indeed, and she gave me in explanation, several very insufficient reasons, with which, however, I pretended to be contented. We acted Mariane, my aunt enacting the part of the heroine; the representation had, by no means, the success of the reading, and was, therefore, not repeated.

It was on this excursion that I was present, for the first time, at a stag-hunt on horseback. At Genlis, I had only hunted the boar; hunting the deer appeared to me delightful, especially as every one admired the grace

with which I rode. From Villers-Coterets, M. de Genlis and I went to Sillery, which I visited for the first time. Madame de Puisieux, who had always been cool to me, received me, nevertheless, politely, though with somewhat of dryness, which redoubled my natural timidity. She spoke to me of the applauses I had received at Villers-Coterets, and at last requested me to let her hear my performance on the harp. This was six days after my arrival. I played and sang; and she appeared to be enchanted, as well as M. de Puisieux. "It must be allowed," said she, "that she is seducing." I do not know why this phrase should have offended me, but I replied, in the first impulse of my displeasure, with some degree of warmth, "However, madame, I have never seduced, nor desired to seduce any person whatever." She was exceedingly astonished at my reply, for till this time I had scarcely said anything but *yes* and *no*. She looked at me steadily, but said nothing. In the evening, M. de Genlis reprimanded me for my reply, and the next day I trembled to meet Madame de Puisieux, with whom I happened in the morning, to be thrown tête-à-tête in the saloon. Madame de Puisieux, reclining on the sofa as usual, was engaged with her knitting, and I with my embroidery; we were both silent for about ten minutes. At last Madame de Puisieux, taking off her spectacles, and turning towards me, said, "Madame have you made a vow to be always thus with me?" I replied in a trembling voice, "How, madame?" "Yes," she rejoined, "I am told you are gay and agreeable in general, and for the last eight days you have preserved an obsti-

nate silence; may I presume to ask you the reason?" At this pressing question, I immediately resolved to reply frankly, because the tone in which it was asked had something lively and obliging in it. "Madame," said I, "it is from fear of displeasing you; you wear an air of severity which intimidates and distresses me." "You are quite wrong to be afraid of me," replied she, "I am exceedingly disposed to become attached to you; what do you wish me to do, to put you at your ease with me?" "What are you now doing," cried I, throwing my arms about her neck; tears of tenderness stopped my words; she was herself strongly affected; took me in her arms, held me there, and kissed me several times with the most touching sensibility. From this time, I vowed in my heart a lasting and tender attachment to her; and she deserved it, for the excellence of her heart and her principles, and the charm of her talents. We talked together with complete freedom, she said a thousand kind things to me, and I promised that I should, in future, behave towards her as if I had known her from my infancy. An hour afterward, M. de Puisieux returned from walking with M. de Genlis and six or seven other persons. I begged Madame de Puisieux to say nothing of what had passed between us, as I had thought of a pretty manner of communicating it. A few minutes after the company was seated, I said with a careless air, that not having taken a walk that day, I wished to exercise my limbs; I ran and made two or three leaps about the room, and then threw myself into Madame de Puisieux's chair, uttering, at the same time, a great quan-

tity of nonsense; she burst into fits of laughter and every one of the company seemed petrified with surprise. M. de Puisieux was enchanted, and told his wife, that he had always predicted that she would love me to excess. All this evening was a delightful one to me, and the days that succeeded it were the happiest of my life. Madame de Puisieux became exceedingly attached to me. She made me change my room in order to be near her. I rode out on horseback every morning with M. de Puisieux, on some of his fine English horses. In the evening, instead of walking, I remained tête-à-tête with Madame de Puisieux, who sauntered with me up and down the court of the garden for half an hour; we passed the rest of the time in conversation in the drawing-room. Her conversation was animated, sparkling and charming. She had lived under a part of the regency, and her husband became, afterward, minister for foreign affairs; she was the granddaughter of the great Louvois, and had her memory full of a number of interesting and curious anecdotes, which she told admirably. Before supper my harp was brought into the saloon, and I played upon it for an hour; after supper I played on the guitar or the harpsichord for half an hour; then I played at piquet with Madame de Puisieux, against her husband, who held cards against us both, and then I retired to bed. I did not in general remain in my room, except from half past ten till two, on my return from my ride with M. de Puisieux. While my hair was dressing, I read; a habit which I have always preserved in all places where I have resided. At this time it was the custom, both at Paris

and in the country, to receive gentlemen's visits at the toilette; but this I never did, in order to reserve that time for reading; so that, since my marriage, I have never spent a single day without passing a good part of it in reading. After dressing, I played on the harp for an hour, and wrote for three quarters of an hour. I was then engaged in re-writing my first comedy, "False Delicacy," and I finished it on this excursion. Besides this, I made extracts from the books I read. Madame de Puisieux, in our evening meetings, often used to make me read aloud, while she worked at her tapestry; we had an excellent library at Sillery. Here I also read the "Treaty of Westphalia," by Father Bougeant; "The Manner of Judging of Works of Talent," by Father Bouhours; and "The Dialogues of Aristus and Eugenius," by the same author, which gave me the taste for devices I have since always possessed. I read also the poems of Pavillon; "The History of Malta," by the Abbé de Vertot; and works of St. Evremond. On rainy days everybody remained in the drawing-room, by which means I gained three or four additional hours of study.

Madame de Puisieux, knowing that I was constantly writing, begged me one day to write her portrait, of which I made two the same day, to the measure of a song, the one a pretended portrait, the other a real likeness. In the evening I sang the first, and then the second, accompanying them with my harp. These couplets received the applause with which her goodness always rewarded whatever I did for her. I subjoin the verses:—

A Pretended Portrait of Madame de Puisieux.

To the air, Si ton ardeur est mutuelle :—

Point d'esprit, point de caractère,
Point d'agrément,
Ni gaîté, ni désir de plaire ;
Un ton pédant,
Des préjugés, une humeur noire ;
Ne sachant rien,
Pas même un simple trait d'histoire,
La voilà bien.

The Real Portrait of the Same.

Du piquant dans le caractère
Et dans l'esprit
Un désir obligeant de plaire
Qui réussit ;
Du savoir, mais sans y prétendre ;
N'affichant rien,
Pas même un coeur sensible et tendre,
La voilà bien.

We went three or four times to Rheims, simply to pay a visit to Madame de Droménil. We also went two or three times to Louvois, to dine with the Marquis de Souvré, the brother of Madame de Puisieux. One day a person belonging to Rheims brought us a young musician, who played on the dulcimer in an astonishing style ; Madame de Puisieux regretted that I could not play on that instrument. I remembered this remark ; and that very evening I agreed in secret with the musician that he should come every day, at half past six in the morning, to give me a lesson ; these instructions I took regularly in the wardrobe, at the top of the house, for a fortnight ; and, moreover, on returning from my rides in the morning, I used to play on the dulcimer

alone for at least three hours; so that, in three weeks I could play as well as my teacher two airs; the one, the Exaudet minuet, and the other, the Furstemberg, with several variations. M. de Genlis, who was in the secret, had had made for me a pretty scarlet dress, in the Alsacian fashion, which fitted closely to the shape. I put on this one morning, and twisted my long hair round my head, without powder as it was worn by the Strasburg women; above this head-dress, I put a bathing cap to hide it, and over my dress I wore a morning gown, and a mantle of black taffeta; in this double costume I went to dinner, pretending that I had a violent headache. After dinner a footman announced that a young Alsacian girl, who played on the dulcimer, begged to be allowed to enter. Madame de Puisieux desired her to be admitted, and I rose up from the table saying, that I would go and bring her in. I ran into the next room, threw upon the table my cap and my gown, took my dulcimer, and returned quickly into the dining room; the surprise of everybody at table was extreme, and was still further augmented by hearing me play on the dulcimer. M. and Madame de Puisieux came and embraced me with a tenderness which amply rewarded me for all the pains I had taken in my study of the instrument. I was made to wear my Alsacian costume for twelve or fifteen days, in order to give every person who came to Sillery a representation of that little scene. It is not without reflection that I enter into all these little details, they will, perhaps, be useful to the young women who may hereafter read this work. I wish them to understand, that

youth is only happy when it is amiable; that is to say, when the young are docile, modest and attentive to all; and that the principal duty of a young person is to be pleasing in the circle of her own family, and to diffuse among all its members, gayety, amusement and joy. When in the most brilliant part of their existence, we find instances among the young of the contrary, we may be sure they are always blamable. If we examine the characters and habits of young females who are insipid or tiresome, we shall generally find them indolent, lazy, and selfish, thinking only of themselves and never of others. These girls, who are thus destitute of the graces of youth, are consequently without its mildness and its modesty; they are possessed with a puerile and passive vanity, that renders them disgusted with the counsels of experience, which they always regard as reprimands; they are ciphers in society, because no one can be either useful to them, nor experience, on their part, any of the agreeable attentions which one expects from good company. My sister-in-law had no talents; nevertheless, as I have already stated, she was by no means insipid; she loved employment, and was never idle; she was obliging, and always took a part in the gayety and the amusements of others; and this is what may be expected from every young person--even those whose education has been the most neglected.

Madame de Puisieux really loved me to excess, and for that reason she did not spoil me. I was the only person whom she ever reprimanded, and this happened continually; for my vivacity, often degeneraring into

riotous gayety, made me fail in many little points; on these occasions, Madame de Puisieux would reprimand me immediately, aloud, and in the presence of all the company. I have never had to make an effort on myself to enable me to receive these little lessons with humility; I felt the utility of them and was grateful; they gave Madame de Puisieux in my eyes, an air truly maternal, and rendered her still more dear to me; sometimes I used to beg her to leave me some little faults, because, if she succeeded in making me quite perfect, and she had nothing else to reprove me for, I feared I should feel less how I loved her, and how much I ought to esteem her.

The birthday of M. de Puisieux approached, and I determined to celebrate it. I wrote a kind of piece, in which all M. de Puisieux's valets-de-chambre were to perform. I introduced into it M. de Puisieux himself, and the moment I chose was the time he was engaged in dressing. I performed the part of M. de Puisieux. He was of short stature; I wore one of his dressing gowns and his night-cap; I imitated all his peculiarities; I pretended to shave with a pasteboard razor, and during this operation, one of the valets read to me a little story of my own composition, as M. de Puisieux had the Arabian Knights, or other stories, read to him while he shaved. I rose up from time to time to pass into my closet; I went out through one door, threw into the side-scene my night-cap and dressing gown, and came on the stage a moment after in my own character, in a morning gown, with my hair in disorder as if I had just risen from

my toilette; I inquired for M. de Puisieux, and after a little scene, I went off again. I next resumed the dressing gown and night-cap, and reappeared as M. de Puisieux; many other unconnected scenes followed, and brought on the denouement, in which bouquets of flowers were presented to M. de Puisieux, and verses sung in his honor. I succeeded in making the four valets play extremely well; and very naturally; M. de Genlis had also a part, and we rehearsed the piece twice a day. The Marquis and Marchioness de Genlis arrived ten days before the fête, and I added to the piece a short part for my sister-in-law. In order to show off her handsome face and figure, I brought her on the stage, first as an Amazon, afterward as a shepherdess, and lastly as a lady in full dress, wearing all her own diamonds and those of Madame de Puisieux. The latter used always a work-bag, embroidered at Besancon, made of dyed horse-hair, and worked in relief; the bag was very pretty; but she had only one, and that was already faded, and she wished to order another to be made. I advised my sister-in-law to copy the old work bag. At Rheims horse-hair was very well dyed; and she achieved this bag which was quite a new sort of work for her, and exceedingly difficult, with astonishing perfection. She worked at it earnestly for a week; and in order to finish it, after several attempts, she passed three or four nights in this dutiful employment. We had a pretty little theatre erected in the large wing, which was called the royal apartment; and in which, by the way, during the time of the Chancellor de Sillery, Henry IV. had actually slept. The evening be-

fore the fête, I met with a fortunate adventure, from which I procured an admirable situation for my piece. The Duke of Civrac Durfort was the intimate friend of M. de Puisieux, who had obtained for him the embassy of Vienna. The duke, after passing eight years at Vienna, returned to France. All that M. de Puisieux knew from his last letter was, that he was then on his road, and that, before his return to Paris, he would pass by Sillery ; but he was not expected for four or five days. He arrived, as I have stated, the day before the fête, at ten in the morning ; M. de Puisieux was two or three leagues off, on a visit to one of his neighbors ; Madame de Puisieux was still in bed, and I had just got up. I ran instantly with M. de Genlis to receive M. de Civrac, who was just getting out of his coach ; we talked to him as if we had been his oldest acquaintances, though we had never seen him before ; however we soon became acquainted ; we explained our project to him with all possible speed, and it was agreed that he should remain concealed in M. de Genlis's room, which was over mine, and that he should not make his appearance till next day, when he was to present a bouquet to his old friend. We gave directions on the subject to all the house ; all the servants were secret as the grave ; we did not acquaint even Madame de Puisieux with our plan, and I can assert, that never was secret so well kept. The Duke of Civrac, who was about forty-seven, had a genteel face, elegant and agreeable manners, and a good humor, which gained all hearts. He told us that he was dying with hunger ; and my sister-in-law and I undertook the care of

his meals. We thought nothing could be better for him than plums, sweetmeats and orgeat, which we accordingly carried to him. He knelt upon one knee to receive this breakfast at our hands; at the same time confessing he was vulgar enough to feel the want of some meat and wine besides, with which taste of his he were obliged to comply. He acknowledged that he had no memory, and begged, therefore, that his part might be very short. I promised that he should have only one sentence to repeat; and the following is the manner in which I determined to bring him on the scene.

My waiting-maid, Mademoiselle Victoire, had a pretty voice; she was, at most, thirty years of age, very stout, and fresh colored; I brought her into my piece as Madame Milot, portress of the residence of M. de Sillery at Paris. M. de Puisieux had from his earliest youth a passion for fine horses; and I learned from Madame de Puisieux, that he was so careful of them, that he had formerly given up a mistress for no other reason but that she lived in a part of the town very distant from his residence, and that the length of the road fatigued his horses. Upon this anecdote I composed a verse, which met with great success, notwithstanding the irregularity of one of the rhymes. In my piece Madame Milot was supposed to arrive at Paris in a female costume, but with large boots, a horsewhip in one hand, and a bouquet of flowers in the other. She was to advance to the front of the stage, and, addressing M. de Puisieux, was to sing this verse:—

J'accours, mais tout en nage,
Vous offrir ce bouquet,
Voilà de mon voyage
Le seul fâcheux effet ;
Pour vous prouver mon zèle
J'ai pris le mords aux dents,
Jamais pour une belle
Vous n'en fîtes autant.

In addition to this scene, I represented M. de Civrac giving his arm to Madame Milot ; the former had only three or four words to say, which he could never recollect at the rehearsals, but which he promised to repeat to himself often before going to bed. The next morning, the day of the fête, my sister-in-law placed on the work-frame of Madame de Puisieux, the pretty work-bag she had wrought, and I placed in the bag a song I had composed, which consisted chiefly of praises of the bag, and of the ingenuity of my sister-in-law. Madame de Puisieux was the best person in the world for receiving and acknowledging a mark of attention ; she was delighted both with my sister-in-law and with me. There was a large party at dinner, and nothing was talked of but her work-bag and my song.

The windows of the dining-room of Sillery, which is on the ground floor, look out upon large moats filled with water. On leaving table, the Marchioness of Genlis and I dressed ourselves as shepherdesses, and entered a boat prettily decorated with flowers, rowed by M. de Genlis, dressed as a shepherd ; I had my bagpipe, on which no one of the château had yet heard me play ; on hearing the sound of it at a distance, everybody went to the win-

dows, and perceiving us there was a general burst of acclamation as we arrived under the windows where we stopped. The Marchioness of Genlis had a net in her hand; I stopped playing, and M. de Genlis begged his sister-in-law to throw her net; upon this she turned her back a moment, and, dropping the net into the water, she left it there and pulled out another full of bouquets and flowers. This little trick, which she performed very prettily and dexterously, was much applauded; and on the performance of this miracle, I sang, to an accompaniment of my bagpipe, six charming verses written by M. de Genlis. We next took our bouquets out of the net, and arranging them in a basket, we announced our intention of carrying them into the dining-room; the company came to receive us on our disembarkation, and in half an hour afterward all the party was invited to enter the room where the theatre was erected. My piece, in common with all pieces on such occasions, was prodigiously applauded, the only part, which Madame de Genlis has ever played well, was that which I wrote for her in this piece; she looked beautiful as an angel when she appeared in full dress; she was applauded several minutes for her charming appearance; in general she dressed badly, but on this occasion I superintended her toilette, and I never saw her look so handsome. The denouement was very effective; on the appearance of M. de Civrac, M. and Madame de Puisieux uttered a cry of surprise and joy; M. de Civrac himself was so touched, that it was sometime before he could utter a word; at last, still holding Madame Milot by the hand, he advanced to

the front of the scene, but, instead of saying as the part demanded, "that he had ridden to Sillery behind Madame Milot," he cried, in a voice of thunder, "I am come on the back of Madame Milot." . . . . The shouts of laughter, which sounded through the saloon, did not permit him to finish the phrase. He turned to me saying that he had made a slip of the tongue. I was in a great passion, and when the noise and laughter had a little subsided, I obliged him to repeat the phrase as I had written it. The fête was terminated by a round, which we all sang as we danced; the words, which were extremely pleasant and lively, were composed by M. de Genlis.

The next morning, as we rode out on horseback, M. de Puisieux desired me to tell M. de Genlis, that he gave up to him the place of governor of Epernay, worth 7,000 francs a year. This was a splendid and honorable present, totally unexpected by us; and it caused us both great pleasure. There was a large company from Paris on this excursion; among others was the Comte de Rochefort, a relation of M. de Puisieux and Messieurs de Genlis; he was found of literature and corresponded with M. de Voltaire, who was very anxious to make partisans among persons belonging to the court. M. de Rochefort, who was extremely flattered at receiving letters from Voltaire, never failed, when there was no other company than the family, to read them to us. I discovered in these letters, flattery the most extravagant, and impiety the most revolting; M. and Madame de Puisieux were equally disgusted with them. What astonished us most was the tone in which M. de Voltaire

complimented M. de Rochefort upon his philosophy and his philosophical understanding; a phrase which meant his want of religion; now, M. de Rochefort had the deepest sense of religion; he protested to us (and he was sincerity itself) that he had made a resolution throughout this correspondence never to touch on the subject of religion. But it has since been discovered that this was one of M. de Voltaire's methods to drag people of rank into his set. In this same excursion, I met with an adventure, which did great credit to my memory. M. de Rochefort was a friend of a very agreeable poet called M. Desbordes, who had sent him a manuscript fable of his, entitled "Dapane and the Butterfly." There were in it one hundred and thirty lines of eight syllables each; M. de Rochefort, after dinner, read it to us aloud; I thought it charming, and begged to be allowed to read it once more; I then returned it, saying that I knew it by heart, which was perfectly true. I have never since forgotten it; the poem has since been printed in several collections.

I read a great deal at Sillery. M. de Puisieux had an excellent library, and I made a good use of it. I read aloud very well; the sound of my voice was pleasing, and in the afternoon, when the rest of the company was gone to walk, I read aloud, as I have already mentioned, to Madame de Puisieux; and my readings were almost always from books of history or plays. The reflections of Madame de Puisieux enhanced greatly to me the value and the interest of what I read. I brought away from Sillery a great quantity of extracts. I loved to enlarge my collection; nothing attached me more to my books

than the enormous collection of notes, extracts, and remarks I had collected, and which filled already a vast number of portfolios. Before leaving Sillery, I made Madame de Puisieux a present which delighted her. She had begged me to give her in writing a little list of all the airs I could play on my harp, the guitar, the harpsicord, etc., of which the number was prodigious. A copyist of Rheims wrote out for me the whole collection, in a pretty little volume, bound in morocco, to which I added all my sonatas, variations, rondos, etc., which I played on these instruments, giving a new name to each of the pieces of music; for example, my favorite sonata of Alberti, I styled the Puisieux; I gave that of which M. de Puisieux was most fond and which he asked me for the oftenest, the name of his favorite riding horse; and to all this I added a dedicatory epistle, addressed to Madame de Puisieux, which I hear quote:—

Quand on veut réussir et plaire,
Qu'on n'est sophiste ni méchant,
Qu'on veut instruire en amusant,
Qu'un livre est difficile à faire!
Vous, en qui l'on voit tant d'esprit,
Du mien daignez être l'arbitre,
Vous le trouverez bien écrit
Si vous en exceptez l'épître;
Qu'il ne soit connu que de vous,
A vous seule j'en fais hommage;
S'il mérite votre suffrage
Combien il fera de jaloux!
L' auteur saura braver les coups
De l'envie et de la satire,
Si, malgré tout leur vain courroux,
A son livre il vous voit sourire!

I presented this little volume to Madame de Puisieux the evening before we left Sillery; she received this trifling mark of affection with her usual expressions of pleasure, that is to say, with real transports of joy.

Madame de Puisieux, on quitting Sillery, after Christmas, took me with her to Paris; we remained a fortnight at Braine, the residence of the Dowager Countess of Egmont, mother-in-law of the young and pretty countess, who was also resident there. The Countess of Egmont had formerly been the intimate friend of M. le Duc, first minister of state during the youth of Louis XV. I collected from her conversation with Madame de Puisieux many curious anecdotes of this period particularly relative to the beautiful Mademoiselle de Clermont, sister of the duke, and of whom Madame de Puisieux had been the friend. I met at this house the old Marquis of Croi, who, at the age of fifty, appeared to be eighty; he had been a great favorite among the women, and could not overcome his regret at being no longer beloved by them. He still preserved all his coxcombical habits, and continued to dress in the most ridiculous style of elegance. This was the gentleman whom the old queen styled The Invalid of Cuthera; but what a melancholy spectacle is that of an invalid without glory, whose infirmities recall nothing to our minds but the remembrances of disgraceful excesses! This premature old man was full of ill humor and whims; and being unable any longer to look amiable in the eyes of young women, he hated them. He affronted me; and I revenged myself in a manner which delighted Madame d'Egmont the younger. I affected to have for him the

profound respect which one would have for a person of a hundred; he was enraged at this beyond measure, and his vexation produced the most comical scenes imaginable. At last he asked Madame d'Egmont, of what age I thought he was? She replied, that she amused herself with my simplicity, and allowed me to think him ninety years of age. This opinion did not tend to raise me in his favor; he declared that I was something worse than simple; and gave her to understand that he had never met in society with a young person so extremely stupid. Towards the end of my stay at Braine, I met a real old man, but who was exceedingly agreeable, the Marshal de Richelieu, father of the younger Madame d'Egmont. I looked upon him with great curiosity, as a person who had seen Louis XIV., and lived in habits of intimate friendship with Madame de Maintenon. The marshal was agreeable in his manners, and full of goodness and mildness: he had gained successes in the field, which honored his old age, and he was no way humbled at the thought, of having ceased to acquire successes of a more frivolous description. It was on this occasion that I heard him state that he had in vain declared to Voltaire that the testament of the Cardinal de Richelieu was perfectly authentic, and that the original existed in his own house; Voltaire refused to retract any of the falsehoods he had written upon this subject. I had already heard the something from Madame d'Egmont. I thought on hearing this, that the marshal ought to have given a public contradiction in writing, to that historic falsehood. But he did not wish to quarrel with Voltaire, who styled

him his hero; and besides, like all public persons, he dreaded public ridicule, public scandal, and above all the pen of Voltaire; and thus it is, that small considerations, and the dread of a coalition of encyclopedists, have a thousand times in our days, been the means of concealing multitudes of useful truths. The Marshal de Richelieu, however, had sufficient good sense and understanding to enable him to see the danger of the maxims and the doctrines of these pretended philosophers; he always expressed the same opinions in society, and there are proofs of it in several letters which he has left behind.

I passed this winter in a round of dissipation. I went seldom to the theatres, it is true, and only twice to the ball at the opera; but private balls, dinners at Madame de Puisieux's, or my aunt's large supper parties and visits occupied a great deal of my time. Every Saturday there were suppers at the Countess de Custines', which were charming; the party was entirely composed of women; all our husbands having gone that day to sleep at Versailles, to be present at the king's hunting party on the following morning. We met at eight o'clock, and continued in conversation until one in the morning, with a gayety which never relaxed. We were six in number; Mesdames de Custines and De Louvois, both charming in different ways; Madame d'Harville, equally distinguished by her beauty, her talents, and her disposition; the Countess de Vaubecourt, who was extremely pretty, and very amusing in company by her sallies of what seemed naïveté, though she was anything but ingenuous; she was the cousin of Madame de Custines.

There were, as yet, no scandalous stories published about her behavior; her husband's gravity had hitherto preserved her reputation; but the year following a notorious adventure obliged M. de Vaubecourt to demand a lettre-de-cachet, which he obtained; he then shut her up in a convent, where she passed the rest of her days. Our fifth lady was the Countess of Crény; she was the only one of the party who was not pretty. She was but twenty though she looked forty; her behavior was always irreproachable, and her disposition excellent; but she used to divert us with relating all the declarations of love she received, especially at supper at the house of her mother, the Countess de la Tour du Pin. Madame de Custines insisted on knowing the names of these unfortunate lovers; and they always turned out to be people whose names were utterly unknown to us, or persons of forty of fifty years of age, who must have been mortally tiresome even at thirty. As Madame de Crény told us that she perpetually found love letters in her reticule when she left it in the drawing-room during supper, Madame de Custines and I determined on writing her a most passionate letter, which we slipped into her bag one evening. This letter was so extravagant and so pleasant, that I am sorry I have not preserved it. Madame de Crény had an elegant establishment; and though she was too fat and too tall to dance, she was excessively fond of dancing; she gave some delightful balls that winter, to all of which I was invited; I danced there several quadrilles, and invented one which made rather too great a sensation. The fashion of acting proverbs

still continued; I called my quadrille The Proverbs, in which each couple formed a proverb, as they marched two and two before beginning the dance. Every one had selected his proverb. We had given Madame de Lauzin this one, "A good name is better than a golden girdle;" she was dressed with the greatest simplicity, and wore a gray girdle, quite plain. She danced with M. de Belzunce. The Duchess of Liancourt danced with M. de Boulainvilliers, who wore the costume of an old man; their proverb was, "The old cat gets always a young mouse." Madame de Marigni danced with M. de St. Julien, who was dressed as a negro; she passed her handkerchief from time to time over his face, as if to say, "It is difficult to wash an Ethiop white." I do not remember either the proverb or the cavalier of the Marchioness de Genlis, my sister-in-law; my partner was the Viscount de Laval, who was splendidly dressed, and covered with jewels; I was dressed as a peasant girl; our proverb was, "Contentment is better than riches;" my air was gay and animated; the viscount's, without trying to make it so, was gloomy and melancholy. We were ten in number. I composed the air of the quadrille which was very pretty and bounding. Gardel composed the figure of the dance, which, according to my motion, was also to represent a proverb, "Run backwards before you leap;" Gardel made out of this idea the liveliest and prettiest country dance I have ever seen. We had a great many rehearsals; and our quadrille was so much admired, that we resolved on dancing it at the ball of the Opera; but unfortunately, this quadrille had excited a good deal of

jealousy, among some gentlemen of the Palais Royal, who had been unsuccessful in their endeavors to be of the set. They knew three or four days before hand of our intentions to dance it at the Opera, which was then held in the saloon of the Palais Royal; and a conspiracy was formed, to prevent us from dancing it. We entered the ball-room at one in the morning, and all six were without masks. We walked round the saloon, which resounded with acclamations, repeated until the time we stood up to dance; every one moved as if to make way for us; when, just as we were leading off, a gigantic cat leaped suddenly, with a purring noise, into the midst of us. This was meant as an antagonistic proverb, "Take care not to wake the sleeping cat." A young Savoyard, wrapped in fur, resembling cat-skin, played the part; our partners did not take the thing amiss at first, but pushed the cat out of the way softly enough; this encouraged the cat who seemed resolved not to allow us to dance; upon this, our cavaliers, in spite of all our entreaties, gave the cat a great many kicks; and the spectators who wished to see our quadrille, took our part, and the unfortunate cat was seized, and carried out of the room. This malignant joke spoiled, in my mind, all the amusement of the evening, for I feared it would have some unlucky results. Our quadrille met with unbounded success, and was applauded to the echo; I was charmed with this, as it restored our cavaliers to their former good humor. Three of them, Messieurs de Boulainvilliers, De Belzunce, and De St. Julien, our best dancers, were in a violent rage against the unlucky cat;

it was in vain I told them that the animal had been ill enough treated to prevent it from returning, for a "scalded cat dreads even cold water;" they wished to question him about the authors of this malicious scheme. We dissuaded them from making these inquiries. We heard, some days afterward, that it was a certain young prince and his friends; but as the triumph had been on our side, our cavaliers were easily calmed, and our lady dancers escaped with no other misfortune than the fright. M. de St. Julien, who was the most annoyed about the cat, was a charming young man; it was said of him that it seemed as if nature, in giving him a beautiful face, had done so in sport; his fine complexion was exactly like rouge, and he had on his chin two black moles, placed precisely as patches then worn on most of the women's faces; so that his pretty male face looked like a frolic of nature. He had once fought a duel about these misplaced graces; he was brave and clever, and had not the slightest touch of coxcombry about him.

I amused myself a great deal at home, also, this winter; my saloon was large, and we not only performed proverbs in it, but a comic opera, of which my friend, Mademoiselle Baillon (afterward Madame Louis, wife of the celebrated architect,) composed the music; M. de Sauvigny wrote the opera, and introduced into it a part for me, in which I played on the harp, the guitar and the bagpipe. We played also a pretty comedy, called, "The Miser in Love." Mademoiselle Baillon was a charming young person; she was handsome, mild, modest, prudent and clever; she was a pianist of the first

order; she composed music admirably and with astonishing facility; she composed a comic opera, (Fleur d'Epine,) which was played with applause; it would have been still more successful if the words had been better written; but the poet had completely spoiled Count Hamilton's charming tale. Our little performance which took place between two screens, always terminated by a delicious concert, which was led by the famous Cramer, who passed that winter at Paris; he was the finest violin player I ever heard; Jarnovitz was the second violin; Duport played the violincello, and Mademoiselle Baillon the piano; I sang and played on the harp; Friseri, who, though blind, played on the mandoline in an astonishing style, assisted also at these concerts, as did Albanèze, the Italian singer. Our performers in comedies and proverbs were the Count d'Albaret, Coqueley and the President de Périgny; (the most celebrated male performers in proverbs of the day;) our women were the Marchioness of Roncé, Mademoiselle de Baillon and myself. We had for audience about fifteen people; M. de Sauvigny, the Abbé Arnaud, the author; the Chevalier de Talleyrand, brother of the Baron, a friend of M. de Genlis; the Chevalier de Barbantane; M. de Vérac, afterward ambassador to Copenhagen; his wife, in whom I admired the union of two qualities, very rarely found together, extreme vivacity and extreme mildness: her conduct has been always admirable; she followed her husband into Denmark, where she died.

The rest of our audience was composed by turns of the Count and Countess of Brancas, Madame de

Custines, her husband and her brother-in-law, etc. My aunt never came to these little parties; however, I invited her, well knowing that she would refuse the invitation; my friends were not hers; besides she had no desire to see me act proverbs, nor to hear me play on the harp. This winter M. d'Albaret proposed to me the idea of a little piece which delighted me. He used to visit Madame de Bocage, and related to us all that passed at her little suppers to the wits. M. d'Albaret had been several times at Ferney and imitated M. de Voltaire's manner to perfection. It was agreed that we should act the little suppers of Madame du Bocage; and that we should suppose M. de Voltaire at Paris. M. d'Albaret took this part; M. de Genlis, the Chevalier de Barbantane and four or five other persons, assumed the characters of other wits. I wore the costume of a woman of fifty, and from the instructions of Monsieur d'Albaret, I played with great success Madame du Bocage; I spoke of my travels in Italy; I was complimented on my Columbiad and my former beauty; then every one's attention was turned to M. de Voltaire, who performed his part with consummate skill, and without any caricature. He related anecdotes and repeated verses, among which were a great many impromptus in my praise—or rather in praise of Madame de Bocage. We had five Suppers of Madame du Bocage, without becoming tired of the kind of pleasantry which predominated in them. M. d'Albaret was inimitable in Voltaire. We all engaged to keep the secret of these suppers, and it was so well kept, that they were never alluded to in society. Amidst

all this dissipation I still found occasion to cultivate my talents for all sorts of music, as I was continually asked to play; but besides this, I regularly read an hour a day during the time I was at my toilette, and I found means of securing as much time for making extracts. There were always at least two days in the week that we did not go out: on these days I read five or six hours, and wrote two or three; besides this, I copied the memorials which M. de Genlis was continually composing for the ministers, relative to the army or navy; and I had to write these out very neatly from dreadfully blotted copies; I never was employed in anything more fatiguing to me. I trembled when I saw him come into my room with his huge sheets of paper in his hands; however my complaisance in this respect has not been useless to me, as it regarded my literary occupations. M. de Genlis had a great deal of talent, and wrote beautiful verses; but when he composed in prose he was exceedingly diffuse. In reading his memorials, which were full of good ideas well expressed, I saw that they might be much abridged, and that they would be improved by doing so. This was a delightful discovery to me. I suggested these abridgements to him; he rejected them at first, and ridiculed my ideas on the subject, but I persevered. I proposed M. de Sauvigny as arbiter; who pronounced in my favor. It was necessary to alter some phrases, as is always the case when you have to abridge. I offered a little specimen of my plan, which was accepted. I had now ample authority to cut and carve; I abridged all the memorials with great care, and some-

times rewrote them from beginning to end. I gained nothing by my new scheme but the saving of paper; but I could boast that the writing was my own, and this feeling of self-love encouraged me, and took away all sense of ennui from my labor; and I thus acquired a habit of arranging my ideas in a luminous manner, and of writing with precision. It was this year that I wrote my first historical novel, founded on an anecdote in the life of Tamerlane. This novel was entitled "Parisatis, or the New Medea;" it was horribly tragical, and written in a volume which contained two hundred pages of my writing. M. de Morfontaine and M. de la Reynière lent me books in the most obliging manner, and allowed me to keep them as long as I pleased. This winter I read with inexpressible delight "Pascal's Thoughts," the "Funeral Orations of Bossuet" and the "Sermons for Lent" of Massillon. I had already read these immortal works; but apparently my understanding was now formed; for I appeared to feel as if I read them for the first time, so strong were the sentiments of astonishment and admiration which their perusal caused me. I read these three sublime writers in the following manner; first, the profound Pascal occupied my mind for half an hour, and fortified my faith by his admirable reasonings; then Bossuet raised me above the earth and all my own concerns; and lastly, I rested entranced in the heavens with Massillon. The majestic flow of his eloquence, and the sweetness and harmony of his language, have something about them which is truly divine. How I pity those who have no love of reading, of study, or of the fine arts! . . . .

I have passed my youth amidst amusements and in the most brilliant society ; but I can assert with perfect truth, that I have never tasted pleasures so true as those I have found in the study of books, in writing or in music. The days that succeed brilliant entertainments are always melancholy, but those which follow days of study are delicious ; we have gained something, we have acquired some new knowledge, and we recall the past day not only without disgust and without regret, but with consummate satisfaction.

About the middle of winter I read with enthusiastic admiration the Natural History of M. de Buffon ; the perfection of his style enchanted me and I studied it intensely. I discovered that it was impossible to add anything to the sentences and paragraphs of this splendid work, and that it was equally impossible to retrench anything from it ; I thence concluded that it was written with the most luminous clearness and the most admirable precision. Massillon, who was the first to initiate me somewhat into the secrets of harmony, as well as the author of " Telemachus," qualified me in some measure to feel the melody of that admirable prose. I endeavored also to displace some words, and to change others by substituting synonyms for them ; but I saw that the slightest alteration marred the harmony, or injured the sense ; this proved to me that no author was ever so perfectly acquainted with the value and propriety of words and expressions. After a long and diligent examination of these styles, I read over again towards the end of the winter all my compositions and my historic novel ;

and except my "Reflections of a Mother Twenty Years Old," and my comedy of "False Delicacy," which I determined to retouch, I burned the whole; and I had good reason to do so for the rest was extremely ill-written. M. d'Albaret persuaded me to learn Italian, and sent me an old teacher called Fortunati, under whom I made great progress in a short time.

This year my aunt was seized with a fancy which occasioned me a great deal of annoyance; she insisted on playing on the harp and making verses. I gave her lessons on the instrument every day I went to dine with her; but she is a scholar who has never done me great honor. As for verse-making, her attempts at it were by no means fortunate. She was in every respect extremely ignorant. I do not think she had ever read two pages of a good book; she did not even read romances. It was she who some years after said, speaking of M. de Saint Priest, the Turkish ambassador, that he had, near Constantinople, a charming country house, on the shores of the Baltic. With this fund of erudition she began to compose verses. Her first piece of poetry was her own portrait, which was neither insipid nor flattered; there was some gayety and even wit about the ideas, but there was not a single verse in measure, and there were several feet wanting in each line; I corrected this singular production. I was far from thinking then that my aunt, who was thirty years old, would, seven or eight years afterward, compose tragedies; to be sure she never would have written them, bad as they were, without the aid of M. Lefevre. The Duke of Orleans was still en-

amoured to her. M. de Montesson was then eighty-seven, and my aunt seriously looked forward to the high rank which she afterward attained. There was but one obstacle in the way—and this was her platonic affection, which every one knew, for the Count de Guines. But ambition inspired my aunt with many marvelous inventions; I shall soon have to relate them in detail, and they will be found very curious. First, however, I shall speak of her friends. Her most intimate friend was Madame de Gourgues, wife of the president, and sister of M. de Lamoignon. This lady was always sick, and almost always reclining on a sofa, and suffering an unhappy passion for the Chevalier de Jaucour, who was called Moonlight. Madame de Gourgues was remarkably pale, and wore no rouge; her paleness suited the style of her face; her person offered several strange contrasts; she had a sentimental air, but her manners were cold: simplicity in her disposition, and pedantry in her understanding; she was very religious, and had a great admiration for the encyclopedists. She was not amiable, but she had many virtues; and she was thought to have a great deal of talent and reading, because she understood English—a thing very rare at that period. We often went to sup at her house; there never was any man present but the Chevalier de Jaucour; and besides my aunt and myself, two other ladies; we were never more than six at table. Madame de Gougues did not please me; she regarded me and treated me as a child, and I kept always a profound silence in her company. My aunt was always amiable and gay at this house, and was the

charm of these little suppers; in her behavior on these occasions there was neither any motive of interest or desire of conquest; and when ambition or interest did not oppose it, my aunt's disposition was delightful.

The Chevalier de Jaucour had an agreeable countenance, a round face, full and pale, black eyes, handsome features, and brown hair, which he wore in disorder, and without powder; he really deserved his soubriquet of Moonlight. His shape was noble, and he had a good air; his disposition was excellent, full of sincerity and honor. He had served in several campaigns; he entered the army at the age of twelve, and had shown as much military knowledge as courage. His understanding was like his disposition, solid and reasonable. At one of these suppers my aunt happened to say that I was afraid of ghosts. Upon this Madame de Gourgues begged the Chevalier de Jaucour to relate his grand story about the tapestry. I had always heard of this adventure as being perfectly true, for the Chevalier de Jaucour gave his word of honor that he added nothing to the story, and he was incapable of telling a lie, in which, besides, in such a case there would have been no pleasantry. The adventure became prophetic at the period of the revolution. I can repeat it with scrupulous fidelity, because, knowing the Chevalier de Jaucour intimately, I have heard him relate it five or six times in my presence.

The chevalier, who was born in Burgundy, was educated at the college of Autun. He was twelve years of age when his father, who wished to send him to the army under the care of one of his uncles, brought him to his

château. The same evening, after supper, he was conducted to a large room, where he was to sleep; on a stool in the middle of the room was placed a lighted lamp, and he was left alone. He undressed himself, and went immediately into bed leaving the lamp burning. He had no inclination to sleep, and as he had scarcely looked at his room on entering it, he now amused himself with examining it. His eyes were attracted by an old curtain of tapestry wrought with figures, which hung opposite to him; the subject was somewhat singular; it represented a temple, of which all the gates were closed. At the top of the staircase belonging to the edifice stood a kind of pontiff or high priest, clothed in a long white robe, holding in one hand a bundle of rods, and in the other a key. Suddenly the chevalier, who gazed earnestly on the figure, began to rub his eyes, which, he thought, deceived him; then he looked again, and his surprise and wonder rendered him motionless! . . . . He saw the figure move, and slowly descend the steps of the staircase! . . . . At last it quitted the tapestry, and walked into the room, crossed the chamber, and stood near the bed; and addressing the poor boy, who was petrified with fear, it pronounced distinctly these words: "These rods will scourge many—when thou shalt see them raised on high, then stay not, but seize the key of the open country and flee." On pronouncing these words, the figure turned round, walked up to the tapestry, remounted the steps, and replaced itself in its former position. The chevalier, who was covered with a cold sweat, remained for more than a quarter of an hour

so bereft of strength, that he had not the power to call for assistance; at last some one came; but not wishing to confide his adventure to a servant, he merely said that he felt unwell, and a person was set to watch by his bedside during the remainder of the night. The following day, the Count of Jaucour his father, having questioned him on his pretended malady of the preceding night, the young man related what he had seen. In place of laughing at him, as the chevalier expected, the count listened very attentively, and then said: "This is very remarkable; for my father, in his early youth, in this very chamber, and with the same personage represented in that tapestry, met with a very singular adventure." . . . . The chevalier would very glady have heard the details of his grandfather's vision, but the count refused to say any more upon the subject, and even desired his son never to mention it again; and the same day the count caused the tapestry to be pulled down and burnt in his presence in the castle courtyard.

Such is the detail of this story in all its simplicity. Mrs. Radcliffe would have been glad to have heard it; and I dare say the Chevalier de Jaucour thought of it at the time of the revolution; for the fact is that when he saw the rods raised, he seized the key of the open country, and fled. He quitted France.

To return to my aunt's society. Her best friend, next to Madame de Gourgues, was the Duchess of Chaulnes, daughter of the Duke of Chevreuse. She was handsome, but totally destitute of talent and feeling, and she had a thousand ridiculous affectations. She is the only woman

whom I have ever known, who could be justly charged with the fault of certain persons of the other sex—coxcombry. There was coxcombry in her air, in her manners, in her tone, and in all her conversation. Her conduct, however, was irreproachable; she had been married when very young to a sort of fool, who, the very day after his marriage, set off suddenly for Egypt. He remained there several years, and on his return refused to see his wife. Another of my aunt's friends was the dowager Princess of Chimay, a very insignificant personage, who had neither the merit nor the beauty of the other Princess of Chimay, so very interesting by her behavior, her piety, and her virtues, and who has been already mentioned as maid of honor to the queen. The rest of my aunt's acquaintances were Madame de la Massais, who has been already spoken of, and the Marchioness of Livri. The latter was young, good tempered, and whimsical; she was so gay, and so frank, that she continually forgot all the usages of society; she was thirty-four or thirty-five years of age. The women of that time of life then wore, instead of shoes, what were called, mules, which were a kind of shoes without quarters, only covering the point of the foot, and standing upon high heels which we all wore at that period. I could never conceive how anybody could walk in these little slippers. One evening at Madame de Livri's, where I was supping with my aunt for the first time, and in a large party, Madame de Livri had a dispute with the Marquis of Hautefeuille, who was at the other end of the room; she got warmer by degrees, and at last grew so angry, that she suddenly drew off one of her slippers,

and threw it at his head. It was really a shoe for Cinderella, for she had the prettiest little foot in the world. I never was more surprised in my life; yet this piece of thoughtlessness brought about a warm friendship between us. I have seen her do a thousand foolish things of the same description, which were all charming in her, because they were always perfectly natural; yet this very woman, so indifferent about what she said or did in her private circle, was unlike all others, and was remarkable for her propriety in all important matters, as she was for the want of these qualities in small matters. She kept an excellent house, and gave delightful suppers, but she went out but rarely, and scarcely ever to parties, though she received a great deal of company at her own house.

The gentlemen my aunt saw most frequently were the Count de Chabot, who was nicknamed Mimi (Puss,) I could never discover for what reason; he was much in fashion, and had a handsome face; he was thought to be witty; I have often seen him, but I have never heard him converse; but at each visit he made anywhere, he left behind him some witticism, good or bad, as it might happen, which was always quoted; when his joke was said, he spoke no more; he had an absent and indifferent air, and was, at the same time, extremely hair-brained and wild. I thought I discovered in him a great deal of coxcombry, a false and affected gayety, and an air of irony, which he never left off, even when he was desirous of pleasing. The Duke of Coigny, his elder brother, was mild, amiable, and polite, and his excellent disposition

made him generally beloved and esteemed. The Marquis of Lusigan, who was called Thickhead, another acquaintance of my aunt's, was the confidant of all the women; the only requisite for this office were good nature and discretion, and pretending to believe that all the intrigues were only platonic affections. Many gentlemen of this period, who were deficient in the requisite talents of success with women, took the modest office of confidant, which gave them in society a certain air of importance, which has sometimes turned out to be useful to several of them. The Marquis of Estréhan, who was now an old man, was then the supreme confidant of the ladies. He had acquired this confidence as a sort of right, and to fail in it would have been an impolite proceeding in his eyes. His advices on this subject were (it is said) excellent; he was the director of all the ladies who had lovers. M. Donézan, brother of the Marquis of Husson, was a perfectly amiable person, and the only good narrator of a story whom I have ever known; he was always amusing; M. de Pont, superintendent of Moulins, also a very amiable man, who, a few years after, married a charming young woman, mother of the present Madame de Fontanges; the Marquis of Clermont, since ambassador to Spain and Naples celebrated for his wit, his amiable disposition and his numerous accomplishments; and the Count d'Albaret; these were the persons who composed her intimate acquaintances. She received, however, many others; but these were only simple visitors. I have several times seen at her house M. and Madame de Boulainvilliers, the Count de

la Marche, afterward Prince of Conti, who died in Spain; he was blunt, but obliging; he was at once odd and insipid—a character of which he is the only example that I have ever seen. From time to time I went, as I have said, to dine or sup with my grandmother, who behaved still with the same coldness to me. One day, when we arrived too early for dinner, we found nobody in the room but her sister, Mademoiselle Dessaleux, my grand-aunt, who was an excellent person. My grandmother was from home, and was not to return till the hour of dinner. Mademoiselle Dessaleux proposed showing me my grandmother's private cabinet, which was full of fine pictures and engravings; first, I looked at an enormous picture representing my grandmother in her youth, and her son then an infant, who was afterward killed at Minden; Madame de la Haie had been much celebrated for her beauty, but I was struck only with the affectation of the portrait; my grandmother was represented as Venus, and her son as Cupid. I looked longer at a charming little exquisite painting, the subject of which was Europa; and I remarked in it a pretty idea; the bull, who is carrying her off, turns round his head, as if to kiss the pretty little naked foot of Europa. I said, I thought Europa handsome but too fat; Mademoiselle Dessaleux smiled, and said, that it was not an historical picture, but a portrait of Madame de Berry, daughter of the regent; she further told me that the princess, during her armour with the late Marquis de la Haie, the husband of my grandmother, had caused this portrait to be painted for him, and had herself presented it to him. I

thought in my own mind that if M. de la Haie's mistress had been only a private individual, my austere grandmother would have thought this picture disgraceful, and would certainly not have kept it so preciously in her cabinet; such a false color vanity can give to objects! . . . . Madame de la Montesson, after the death of my grandmother, became the proprietor of this picture, and presented it to the Duke of Orleans, who placed it in his apartments, where it remained till the revolution; I do not know what became of it afterward.

I did not go this year to Sillery, because I was with child; but I went with my aunt to the Isle-Adam, where I acted notwithstanding my pregnancy. My aunt performed in an opera, of which the music was by Monsigny; this opera has neither been played nor printed; afterward Monsigny burnt it. The opera was called Baucis and Philemon, and the music was charming. My aunt was Baucis, and was dressed as an old woman through the two first acts; the part suited her voice, she had studied it well, and the costume of the old woman made her look quite young; she appeared not more than twenty; she met with great applause in the part, and deserved it.

While on this subject, I shall relate a little incident, which seems to me curious, as it shows to what lengths self-love, even in the most positive matters, may deceive us. At the first representation of the opera, my aunt retired, after the two first acts, to dress as a young shepherdess, and I followed her into a room near the stage, where she was to change her costume. She was not de-

formed, but she had one shoulder much larger than the other, which rendered her back very ill-shaped, when she wore nothing to conceal or disguise the defect, and her shepherdess's bodice left it entirely exposed. I told her of this, but her waiting maid, through a habit of flattery, assured her that her dress became her to perfection. As my aunt appeared to believe this, I placed another mirror behind her, and let her see in the looking glass her own back, which looked quite ridiculous; she examined it, and to my great surprise, was quite of the opinion of Mademoiselle Legrand, her waiting-woman. She played in this dress, which every one thought very strange. After the play, Madame de Boufflers, who was always very attentive to me, took me aside to scold me for not having told my aunt of the bad shape of her back; I justified myself, by saying, that the opinion of her maid had prevailed over mine; but I concealed the circumstance of the mirror, because that would have made my aunt appear truly ridiculous. This opera was performed three times. We acted proverbs. I played a great deal, and often played to dancing parties; our excursion was very brilliant. The Princess of Beauvau and Madame de Poix passed several days there. The former, the sister of Messieurs de Chabot and de Jarnac, was then, I think, thirty-five or thirty-six years of age, and, in my opinion, she was the most elegant person in society, in point of talent, fashion, manners, and the tone of frankness and openness, which was peculiar to herself. Her politeness was at once obliging and noble; her superiority was at once evident, but none ever found it embarrassing. In

A Dancing Party at Madame de Genlis'

From the painting by C. Herpter

her whole conduct there was a communicative easiness of manner; and I have often felt, after having passed half an hour in her company, that I had lost the half of my natural reserve. She had married M. de Beauvau for love; and I have never known in society a husband and wife more remarkable for an example of conjugal affection, more perfect, or in better taste. The Princess of Poix was only the daughter of the Prince of Beauvau, but her step-mother, in point of affection was a real mother to her. I have never seen any cruel step-mothers among persons belonging to the court; they were only to be found in the middling and lower classes. The revolution may have introduced some of these into the higher ranks, but the feeling which inspires these cruel persons is so ignoble that it cannot last long.

Madame de Poix was charming; there was no defect in her shape, but she was not handsome; and she walked lame. She had a beautiful face and complexion. She was gay, frank, witty and piquant. All these advantages which are in general so dangerous to women, have only served to add their charm to the life of Madame de Poix, whose reputation has been always spotless. At the Isle-Adam I also saw the Princess of Hénin, whom I had already met in society; she was young, and had a charming face; but her beauty did not last long; the following winter her complexion was spoiled, and she looked no longer pretty. She had in her person and manner something that seemed too much formed for a person of eighteen; she was said to possess wit, and her reputation in that way is now well established. I have never been

able to judge of this, though I knew her for twelve years; she was of that number of persons, then pretty numerous, who never speak aloud in company, and only with their friends at table, where they always place themselves near each other; or, when not at table, in the recesses of windows; persuading themselves that they can never be appreciated out of the circle of their intimate acquaintances. Thus their wit remains buried in the breast of friendship, and is, for the rest of the world, only a tradition.

We found still resident at the Isle-Adam the Maréchale de Luxembourg and Madame de Lauzun. I was never tired of contemplating the latter, who had the most interesting face, and the noblest and sweetest air I have ever seen; she was extremely reserved, without being insipid; she was uniformly good natured and obliging, without being tiresome; and in her whole manner there was a piquant and original mixture of wit and ingenuousness. The maréchale, as I have already stated, was the oracle of fashion. Her decisions in everything in high life were without appeal. She had made, on such matters, reflections at once witty and ingenious, but from which she often generalized very improperly. Here is a droll instance of this. One morning (it was on a Sunday) we waited only for the Prince of Conti's arrival to celebrate mass; we were all seated about a round table in the drawing-room, on which lay our prayer-books, which the maréchale amused herself by turning over. All at once she stopped at two or three prayers, which seemed to her to be in the worst taste, and of which, in fact, the ex-

pressions were somewhat singular. She made some very bitter remarks on these prayers; upon which I suggested to her, that it was enough if they were repeated with sincere piety, and that God certainly paid no attention to what we call good or bad taste. "Oh, Madame,' cried the maréchale very gravely, "don't take such a notion as that into your head!". . . . A general burst of laughter interrupted her speech. She was not displeased; but she was still persuaded that the supreme judge of all that is good disdains not to judge also of our habits and our manners; and that, even in deeds which are equally meritorious he always prefers those which are performed with the most grace and elegance.

On this occasion, the Count de Guines made no secret whatever of his sentiments (as the phrase then was for the Countess Amelia; and my aunt had frequent attacks of cholic, but they never came on until she retired to rest, which deprived her of none of the pleasures of society. As, before quitting the drawing-room, she complained of this in a whisper to her friends, and especially to the Duke of Orleans, we accompanied her to her room. There she laid herself down in bed, and groaned for exactly three-quarters of an hour, neither more nor less. During this time Madame Choisi, one of her friends and I were employed in heating cloths in an adjoining room; the Duke of Orleans, with tears in his eyes, remained beside her. The Count de Guines was sent out of the room in the course of ten minutes. At last I discovered the plot of this farce; my aunt was sick from the infidelity of the Count de Guines. She frankly laid open all

her sensibility to the Duke of Orleans, and at the same time allowed him to hope that the extraordinary conduct of the Count de Guines would cure her of a passion which was as unfortunate as it was pure. Everything succeeded to her wish. The Duke of Orleans, in spite of his interests of his passion, was so touched with her sufferings and her sentiments, that he conceived a strong dislike to the Count de Guines. It was very amusing to see the looks of indignation with which he regarded the count, when he returned with my aunt and us into her room, and when the count followed the countess's steps everywhere about the drawing-room, and seemed to be overwhelmed with love for her. On these occasions I saw the Duke of Orleans shrug his shoulders several times, and seem ready to break out. I have never been able rightly to discover whether the spectators were the dupes of this plot, which appeared to me somewhat coarse; I remarked that several of the men occasionally smiled, but all the women seemeed to pity the victim of inconstancy. The behavior of my aunt amidst all this was, to my eyes, the most comical thing possible, especially on the day following her attack of cholic. The melancholy and mysterious airs of the ladies who inquired about her health, the half-suppressed sighs of my aunt, and her languishing airs, are things which are impossible to describe. I shall soon mention the private views which induced the Count de Guines to second so well the interests of my aunt. It will be seen that he had a real motive in doing so. Madame de Montesson made me no positive disclosures, but she often gave me vague hints that she

was suffering from an unhappy passion; I never questioned her on the subject, and things rested thus until the end of our excursion.

From the Isle-Adam I went to Balincour, where I passed three months in the most quiet and agreeable manner; there was scarcely ever any one but the family, for we saw very little company. M. and Madame de Balincour kept a large establishment at Paris, but at their country house they received only their intimate friends. The Countess de Balincour had talents, an amiable disposition, and an excellent heart. She has always been one of the friends in whose society I have taken the most pleasure. Though naturally of a serious disposition, and forty years of age, she seemed to me still young, because she was neither pedantic nor sermonizing. M. de Balincour, at the age of forty-two, was of so riotous a gayety, that it was impossible to discover through his frolics, his tricks and his playfulness, whether or not he was a person of talent. But there was in his whole behavior something so original and natural that he was quite amusing. He never behaved in a reasonable manner, except with the Maréchal de Balincour, his uncle and his benefactor. Never was an old man so happy as the maréchal or deserved more to be so, for his piety, his goodness and his mildness. I have spoken of him at length in my Souvenirs. He had still preserved his memory completely, he was not deaf, he read frequently without spectacles and had his teeth till the age of eighty, at which period I saw him. The old curate of Balincour used sometimes to come to dine at the château;

he was a saint in his behavior, but of a simplicity which it was wonderful to meet with nine leagues from Paris. The first day after my arrival, he attached himself to me in a manner that surprised me; he followed me everywhere—in the drawing-room, in our walks and in my room; and his theme was always the truth of the Apostolic Roman religion, of which he recapitulated all the proofs. He ended by fatiguing me. This plot lasted a fortnight; it was a frolic of M. de Balincour's, who made the worthy curate believe that I was a Lutheran, (though I concealed the fact,) and that he had charged him with my conversion. M. de Genlis was with his regiment; on arriving from Paris I found a note from my aunt, informing me that she was ill and confined to bed; I had left her at the Isle-Adam, from whence she was to have gone two days after to Paris; and where, in fact, she went and passed a week; she then went to Villers-Coterets, where she remained for six weeks; and then returned to the Isle-Adam with the Duke of Orleans. She found the Count de Guines there, and the scenes which I have related above recommenced. I supposed the malady of Madame de Montesson was sentimental and I did not disquiet myself much about it. The following morning I called upon her, and found her alone and in bed; she told me at once, placing my hand on her heart, that her disease was there and that it would cause her death; I gave her some common-place topics of consolation. She then showed me a letter from the Count de Guines, who, at the same time that he made a long eulogy of her virtues and the strongest pro-

testations of esteem, admiration and attachment, declared that he no longer felt any love for her, that he was enamoured of another. My aunt added, that she had not concealed from the Duke of Orleans either the letter or her own grief on the occasion; (this I easily believed;) that the Duke of Orleans had conducted himself admirably towards her, and that by his behavior towards her on this occasion, he had acquired a right to her affections. I still continued to repeat the same commonplaces—that I hoped she would recover all this, etc. She said, that if it had not been for the abominable conduct of the Count de Guines, she would have carried her fatal passion to the grave; but that she still had need of a long separation from the count, and that she had stated this to the Duke of Orleans, entreating him to obtain for the count the embassy to Prussia. I now comprehended why the count had lent himself to her plots; he had very little love, and a good deal of ambition, and had long ardently desired an embassy; without this farce he might have waited a long time; but it was very certain that the duke would now solicit the favor with so much earnestness, that he could not fail to obtain it. I kept up my part, an ignorant spectator of the comedy, saying only to my aunt that I feared the new passion of the count might hinder him from accepting the embassy. She replied to this, that, in fact, the count left France with regret, but that the Duke of Orleans had spoken to him so decidedly on the subject, that he had been compelled to comply. He obtained the embassy, and quitted France two months after.

In order to finish here all that relates to the count, I shall relate an anecdote, which is perfectly characteristic of his cunning. On his arrival at Berlin he was very unfavorably received by the King of Prussia. This prince played on the flute, and was passionately fond of music; the great abilities of the count on this instrument persuaded him that the Court of France had sent him such an ambassador for no other reason. This idea displeased the king; and in the great Frederick, it showed a littleness of mind. The count, seeing that the king continued to treat him with a coolness which was almost insulting, discovered the motive, but feigned to be ignorant of it. He sometimes met a person, who was said to be one of the king's private spies, and one day, in presence of this person, he said, in a tone of the greatest levity and carelessness, that he had now discovered the reason why the king never invited him to his intimate society, at the same time adding, "The king has correspondents at Paris, who must have informed him that I am of a mocking and epigrammatic turn." Some one remarking, "how unjustly any one had given him that character to the king." —"No," said the count, coolly, "some one may easily have given me that character without meaning any harm; at Paris, this kind of wit is but the habitual tone of society; we do not fear it there."

This conversation, as the count anticipated, was reported to the king, who at first said, that he was neither afraid of ridicule or epigrams. He thenceforth treated the Count de Guines very well; invited him to his parties, conversed with him, was charmed with his talents

Frederick, the Wonder of the World

From the painting by J. L. Gerome

and manners, often played duos on the flute with him, and constantly after showed him marks of the highest favor.

Three weeks after my aunt's confidence, I was delivered of my son ; I was then twenty-two ; M. de Genlis returned from his regiment two days before my confinement. I recovered, at least I went to church in a fortnight. My health was never better at any period.

I had read a great deal of Balincour, and had written a prodigious number of notes and extracts ; as I had, besides this, a great number of correspondents, I composed nothing. The succeeding winter passed away like the preceding. I wrote, in imitation of Fontenelle Dialogues of the Dead, but they were more moral ; the first was between Constantine the great and Charlemagne ; the second, between Elizabeth, Queen of England and Christina of Sweden ; the third, between Louis XI. and Henry IV. The Abbé Delille visited me several times this winter ; he recited some beautiful verses, and certainly no one could recite them better than he. This year M. de St. Lambert published his poem, "The Seasons" ; M. and Madame de Beauveau esteemed the author, and were his warm protectors ; they were seconded by all their own coterie, and the work met with a most favorable reception from the public ; but the best judges, though they agreed that the language of the poem was elegant, thought it dull, destitute of imagination, and very tiresome. There is, from the beginning to the end of this work a sombre and monotonous coloring, which renders the reading of it extremely fatiguing ; you feel

that the author has purposely adopted this tone of coloring, that he has wished to be thought a thinker, and that he has mistaken dullness for depth. It is this poem which first introduced into France the philosophic, romantic, and German affectations of melancholy; and besides this, the taste for description, to which personages, passions, sentiments, and virtues are made merely accessory: while forests, plants, rocks, caverns, waters, precipices, and ruins, are made the materials of the subject. It was otherwise once, but *nous avons changé tout cela.* This alteration is the natural consequence of materialism; in withering the heart it has withered along with it our imagination and our literature. In spite of all its defects, however, "The Seasons" is a poem which will always hold an honorable place in French libraries, because its language is elegant, and this is a merit which of itself is sufficient to ensure the existence of a work. Like every other person I read the poem, and I thought then of it as I now write. Another author of the same period excited equal enthusiasm in another department; this was Thomas, and I shared the general admiration, though my opinion has been very considerably changed since. His orations are distinguished by their false emphasis, their florid style, and their forced ideas; but there occurs frequently in them at the same time a true elevation of style and loftiness of thought, and at that time I saw nothing but these qualities. M. de Sauvigny, by means of his arguments against the style of Thomas, enabled me to discover all his defects. It is singular, that with my feelings for nature, I should have been

always a great admirer of Marivaux, in spite of his artificial manner and of Thomas, in spite of his emphasis; but this must have arisen from my persuasion that their style was not affected, and that their manner of writing was natural to them. Their defects are exaggerated excellencies. Thomas saw things in too grand a light and Maurivaux carried his niceties and his delicacies too far. Nothing should be caricatured in writing; this is the true criterion of taste; and without taste there can be no perfection in literature or in the arts. There are two authors, St. Lambert, and before him Fontenelle, who have done much injury to literature; in favor of their talents, we may excuse their own defects, but how shall we pardon them for having raised so many bad imitators of them? A pedantic tone, an affected emphasis, and a false brilliancy, have disgraced all the works that have been published from that time to this. Rousseau himself was not exempt from these defects; but in him they were only deviations from good taste; they do not characterize his general style of writing, which is beautiful, because it is frank, harmonious, and natural. As a writer, however, he is still inferior to M. de Buffon and our other great prose writers; for besides his affected and emphatic passages, there are in his works many detestable modes of expression, and many faults of language.

The history of my first interview with J. J. Rousseau is not very creditable either to my understanding or to my discernment, but it is altogether so singular and ludicrous, that I shall amuse even myself while I recall it

to mind in the following account of my acquaintance with him.

It was about six months after Rousseau's arrival at Paris; I was then eighteen years of age, and although I had never read a single line of his works, I felt a great wish to see a man so celebrated, and who particularly interested me, as being the author of the "Devin du Village;" this delightful work which will ever please those who admire simplicity of style and manner, is distinguished by a musical expression perfectly suited to the words, and in a degree scarcely to be met with in any subsequent work, except the comic operas of Monsigny, and the grand operas of Gluck. But to return to Rousseau. He was very shy and unsociable, refusing either to receive or to pay visits; and as I did not feel courage enough to take any steps to make his acquaintance, I expressed a wish to know him, without thinking it was possible to find the means of gratifying my wish. One day M. de Sauvigny, who sometimes saw Rousseau, told me in confidence that M. de Genlis intended to play me a trick, by bringing me some evening under the disguise of J. J. Rousseau, Preville, and presenting him to me as Rousseau himself. This idea made me laugh very much, and I promised to appear entirely deceived by this joke, which was called a Mystification, a practice much in fashion at that time. I very seldom went to the play, and had only seen Preville two or three times, from boxes at a great distance from the stage. Preville possessed the art of mimicry, and of entirely altering the expressions of his countenance: he was of about the

same height as Rousseau, (for every one knew that Rousseau was short), and M. de Genlis had really formed the plan that had been confided to me, but had forgotten it almost immediately. M. de Sauvigny had also forgotten it, and I alone remembered the circumstance.

I remained three weeks without seeing M. de Sauvigny, but at the end of that time he came and told me, with an air of marked satisfaction, in presence of M. de Genlis, that Rousseau was extremely desirous of hearing me perform on the harp, and that if I would have the kindness to play before him, he would bring him to me the next day. Believing it quite certain that I should only see Preville, I had great difficulty in replying without losing my gravity; I, however, kept a tolerably demure countenance, whilst I assured him that I should certainly play as well as I could for J. J. Rousseau.

The next day I waited with impatience for the appointed hour, thinking that the metamorphosis of a Crispin into a philosopher would be highly ludicrous and entertaining. I was in high spirits whilst expecting his arrival, at which M. de Genlis, who knew that I was naturally very timid, was much surprised, being unable to understand how the idea of receiving so grave a personage could possibly produce that impression upon me, and when he observed that I laughed the moment Rousseau was announced, my behavior appeared to him quite unaccountable.

I must confess that nothing ever appeared to me so odd and fantastical as his figure and appearance, which I

merely considered as a masquerade. His coat, his maroon-colored stockings, his little round wig, the whole of this costume, his manners and deportment, seemed to me a scene of comedy most ludicrous, and perfectly well acted. I, however, made a prodigious effort, assumed a tolerably appropriate countenance, and after having stammered out two or three words of politeness, sat down. The conversation began, and unfortunately for me in a rather lively strain; I remained silent, and now and then burst into a fit of laughter, but so naturally and so heartily, that this extraordinary display of mirth did not displease Rousseau. He said several pretty things respecting youth in general; I thought Preville witty, and that Rousseau himself would not have been so entertaining, as he would have been displeased at my laughing. Rousseau spoke to me, and as I did not feel the least embarrassed, I answered very unceremoniously the first thing that occurred to me. He thought me a very odd person, and I thought he acted with a degree of perfection which I could not sufficiently admire. Caricatures have never made me laugh, but what delighted me in this instance was the simplicity, the natural and unaffected manner of him whom I looked upon as an actor, and who consequently appeared much superior in private, to what I had seen of him on the stage. I however, could not help thinking that he represented Rousseau as too indulgent, good-natured and cheerful. I played on the harp, and sang some of the songs of the "Devin du Village," Rousseau looking at me all the while, smiling with that kind of pleasure which is pro-

duced by genuine infantile simplicity; and in taking his departure he promised to come the next day to dine with us. I had been so much entertained by his company, that this promise delighted me, and I jumped for joy, and accompanied him to the door, saying all the pretty things and all the odd things imaginable. When he was out of the house, I ceased to constrain myself, and began to laugh most heartily; M. de Genlis, struck with astonishment, looked at me with an air of severity and displeasure which redoubled my mirth. "I see very well," said I, "that you acknowledge at last that you have not deceived me, and you are piqued; but indeed how could you suppose that I should be simple enough to take Preville for J. J. Rousseau." "Preville!" "Yes; it is in vain to attempt to deny it, I shall not believe you." "Are you mad?" "I confess that Preville has been most entertaining, and has acted most naturally and without exaggeration; in short, that nothing could be better as a performance, but I am persuaded, that with the exception of the dress, he has not imitated Rousseau. He has personified a good old man, very amiable, and not Rousseau, who would certainly have thought my conduct very strange, and would have been seriously offended at such a reception." I had no sooner pronounced these words, than M. de Genlis, and M. de Sauvigny began to laugh so immoderately that I began to feel surprised; an explanation ensued, and to my great confusion I heard that it was certainly J. J. Rousseau I had received in that singular manner. I declared that I would never receive him again if he were to be in-

formed of my stupidity, and was promised that he should never know what had occurred: a promise which was strictly kept.

The most singular circumstance in all this is, that by this conduct, silly and inconsiderate as it was, I gained the good opinion of Rousseau. He told M. de Sauvigny, that I was a young person the most unaffected, cheerful, and devoid of pretentions he had ever met with, whereas but for the mistake which had inspired me with so much confidence and good humor, he would have seen nothing in me but excessive timidity. I therefore owed this success to an error, and could not possibly feel the least proud at it. Knowing all the indulgence of Rousseau, I met him again without any feeling of embarrassment, and have always been perfectly at my ease with him.

I never knew a literary character more agreeable or with less affectation. He spoke simply of himself, and without spite of his enemies. He rendered full justice to the talents of M. de Voltaire. He even said that the author of "Zaire" and "Merope" could not be without a soul full of sensibility, but he added that he had been corrupted by pride and flattery. He spoke to us of his confessions, which he had read to Madame d'Egmont. I was too young, he told me, to obtain the same proof of confidence. While on this subject, he thought fit to ask me if I had read his works; I replied, with some embarrassment, that I had not. I was still more confused, when he wished to know why, and looked fixedly at me. His eyes were small, and though deep set, were very piercing, and as if they would penetrate and pry into the

very soul of the individual he was interrogating. It seemed to me that he would have instantly discovered a falsehood or evasive reply; I therefore had no merit in frankly telling him that I had not read his works, because it was said, that there were many things in them against religion. "You know," replied he, "that I am not a Catholic; but no one has spoken of the gospel with more conviction and feeling." These were his very words. I thought he had done with his questions; but he asked me again with a smile, why I blushed in telling him what I have related above. He highly praised my reply, because it was unpretending. He liked above all things simplicity and unaffectedness. He told me that his works were not suited to my time of life; but that I would do well to read "Emile" in a few years. He often talked to us of the manner in which he had composed the "Nouvelle Heloïse." He told us that he wrote all the letters of "Julie" on beautiful small letter-paper with vignettes, that he afterward folded them like letters, and read them in his walks with as much transport as if he had received them from an adored mistress. He recited his "Pygmalion" to us by heart, making a few gestures, the whole, as I thought, in the most energetic, true, and perfect manner. He had a most agreeable smile, full of mildness and finesse, was talkative, and, as far as I found, very gay. He talked admirably of music, and was a real connoisseur; yet, amidst the heap of romances of his own that he gave me, there was not one that was pretty, or even fit for singing. He made a very bad air for the romance of "Nice de Metas-

tase," which one of my friends, M. de Monsigny, has since set to music for me; the air is now worthy of the words, which are really charming.

He gave me all his romances with the music; the whole together would have formed a very precious volume, for it was all in his own handwriting, and of his own composition, words and music. But the mania of recollections did not prevail then as it does now; his friends were not forgotten, and little importance was given to what may be called his acquaintances, even the most celebrated of them: I scattered and lost this collection, which was neither bound nor stitched together, and I have often regretted it since. Rousseau copied music with singular perfection; I was extremely sorry when he told me that this was his sole means of subsistence.

Rousseau came almost daily to dine at our house, and during five months I had neither noticed caprice in him nor morbid sensibility when we had quarreled on a very singular account. He was very fond of a kind of Sillery wine, of the color of onion skin, and M. de Genlis asked the liberty of sending him some, adding, that he had received it himself as a present from his uncle. Rousseau answered that he would be very happy if he would send him two bottles of it. The next morning M. de Genlis sent to him a basket containing twenty-five bottles of the wine, which so inflamed Rousseau, that he sent back the basket with all its contents, along with a most singular laconic epistle, breathing nothing but anger, disdain, and implacable resentment. M. de Sauvigny completed our astonishment and consternation by telling us Rousseau

was absolutely furious, and declaring that he never would see us again. Wondering how so simple an attention could have given such offence, M. de Genlis asked M. de Sauvigny the reason Rousseau gave for his caprice; he replied, that Rousseau said it was evident they thought that he had modestly asked for two bottles, only to have a present; that the idea was offensive, etc., M. de Genlis told me, that as I was not involved in his impertinence, Rousseau might perhaps consent to return in favor of my innocence. Our regrets were sincere, for we loved him. I therefore wrote a rather long letter, which I sent along with two bottles in my name. Rousseau yielded at last and returned, but though very agreeable with me, he was dry and distant towards M. de Genlis, whose talents and conversation he had hitherto been fond of, and M. de Genlis was never really wholly reinstated in his good graces.

Two months after M. de Sauvigny had a play to be performed at the Theatre Francais, entitled the Persifleur. Rousseau had told us that he did not frequent the theatre, and that he carefully avoided showing himself in public; but as he seemed very fond of M. de Sauvigny, I urged him to go along with us on the first night of the play and he consented, as I had obtained the loan of a grated box, with a private staircase and entrance. It was agreed that I was to take him to the theatre, and that if the play succeeded, we should leave the house before the afterpiece, and return to our house to supper. The plan rather deranged the usual habits of Rousseau, but he yielded to the arrangement with all

the ease in the world. The night of the play, Rousseau came to me a little before five o'clock, and we set out. When we were in the carriage, Rousseau told me, with a smile, that I was very richly dressed to remain in a grated box. I answered, with the same good humor, that I had dressed myself for him. Now I had flowers in my hair, and my head-dress was in the usual fashion of young ladies, but everything else was as simple as could be;—I mentioned these particulars on account of the importance given to them in the sequel. We reached the theatre more than half an hour before the play began. On entering the box, I began to put down the grate, but Rousseau was strongly opposed to it, saying that he was sure I should not like it. I told that the contrary was the fact, and that we had agreed upon it besides. He answered that he would place himself behind me, that I should conceal him altogether, which was all he wished for. I still insisted, but Rousseau held the grate strongly and prevented me putting it down. During this little discussion we were standing; and the box was a front one near the orchestra, and adjoining the pit. I was afraid of drawing the attention of the audience towards us; to put an end to the dispute, I yielded and sat down. Rousseau placed himself behind me, but a moment afterward put forward his head betwixt M. de Genlis and myself, so as to be seen. I told him of it. He twice made the same movement again, and was perceived and known. I heard several persons, looking towards our box, and calling out, "There is Rousseau!" "My God," said I, "you have been seen!" He an-

swered me drily, "That cannot be." Yet the words, "There is Rousseau! There is Rousseau!" passed from one to another, and all eyes were fixed on our box, but nothing further was done. The noise disappeared without producing any applause. The orchestra began, nothing was thought of but the play, and Rousseau was forgotten. I had again proposed to him to put down the grate, when he answered me in a very peevish tone, that it was too late. "That is not my fault," said I. "No, surely," he replied with a forced and bitter smile. I was much hurt at this answer, it was so unjust. I was in great confusion, and notwithstanding my want of experience, I saw pretty clearly how the truth lay. I flattered myself, however, that this strange peevishness would quickly disappear, and I saw that the best thing I could do was to seem not to observe it. The curtain rose, and the play began. I thought of nothing but the new play which succeeded. The author was several times called for, and his success was complete.

We left the box. Rousseau gave me his hand; but his face was frightfully sombre. I told him the author must be well pleased, and that we should have a delightful evening. Not a word in reply. On reaching my carriage I mounted; M. de Genlis came after Rousseau to let him pass first, but the latter turning round, told him he should not return with us. M. de Genlis and I protested against this; but Rousseau, without replying a word, made his bow, turned his back, and disappeared.

The next day M. de Sauvigny was commissioned to question him about this freak, but was strangely sur-

prised at his asserting, with eyes sparkling with rage, that he would never see me as long as he lived for that I had taken him to the play to show him off in the way that wild beasts are exhibited at the fair. M. de Sauvigny answered, that from what he had heard me say the evening before, I had been desirous of putting the grate down. Rousseau maintained that I had made a very feeble effort, and that at any rate, my splendid dress and the choice of the box were proofs sufficient that I never had the intention of concealing myself. It was useless to tell him that my dress was in no wise remarkable, and that a borrowed box could not be one of choice:—nothing could bend him. I was so hurt at this account of his conduct, that I would not take the slightest step to pacify one who had acted so unjustly. Besides this, I knew that there was no sincerity in his complaints; the fact is, that with the hope of producing a lively sensation, he desired to show himself, and his ill-humor was excited by not finding his presence produce more effect. I never saw him afterward. Two or three years later learning, by Mademoiselle Thouin, of the king's garden, (*the Jardin des Plantes*) whose brother he saw frequently, that he was sorry that tickets were necessary to obtain admission into the gardens of Mouceaux, which he was very fond of, I obtained a key of the garden for him, with the liberty of walking in it whenever he pleased; and I sent the key by Mademoiselle Thouin. He returned me thanks; nothing more occurred, and I was pleased at doing him a service, but felt no desire for further intimacy.

The same year M. de Sauvigny brought forward his tragedy, or rather his drama, of Gabrielle d'Estrée, which contains some fine verses and eloquent passages, and some interesting scenes—it was successful. The author possessed talent, and a very sound judgment in general; but he never had any plan, and never produced a perfect dramatic work.

During this winter, I several times went with Madame de Puisieux into a variety of companies, amongst others, into that of the house of the Countess de Brione, who still retained proofs of her renowned beauty; she had the figure of Minerva, which perhaps might be admired, but which never could have been agreeable.

Madame de Brione was highly accomplished, with manners full of dignity and mildness. The most remarkable person in the society of Madame de Puisieux and Maréchale d'Estrée, was the Duke d'Harcourt, brother of the Marquis de Beuvron; he was talented, worthy, and good natured. He was the only man that I ever knew, who, after obtaining the greatest success with women, still preserved the utmost simplicity in his manners and conversation. I likewise frequently supped with Prince Louis de Rohan, afterward the too famous Cardinal de Rohan; though not a very useful clergyman, he was very handsome, and was gay, and graceful in his manners; his conversation was amusing, but so full of frivolity and thoughtlessness, that it was extremely difficult to judge of the qualities of his mind. All that we knew of it was this, that no one endowed with small judgment could have more agreeable manners.

I everywhere met with the younger Madame de Ségur, so called, to distinguish her from her mother-in-law. Madame de Ségur was then two or three and thirty years of age; her face was not pretty, but her teeth were very fine; her look mild, her shape charming, and there was great elegance in her carriage and in her dress. Sweetness and good nature were the chief features in her disposition; she was universally beloved, and deserved to be so. Her husband, M. de Ségur, (afterward a minister of state and a Marshal of France,) who had lost an arm at the battle of Minden, was one of the best of men, and most excellent company; he was fond of me from my childhood, often gave me useful advice, and when he was minister, immediately granted my mother the pension which I asked for her as widow of a lieutenant-general of the king's armies—her second husband, the Baron d'Andlau. The memory of M. de Ségur will always be dear to me. His mother, a natural daughter of the regent, (Duke of Orleans,) was at that time very aged, but possessed charming wit and gayety, was very fond of young ladies, and was beloved by them for her lively and amusing conversation.

Though I am naturally inclined to think well of others, and am of a good-natured disposition, yet there were two persons in society at that time for whom I felt a decided antipathy. One was the Count de Coigny, brother of the duke and chevalier of that name: he followed me wherever I went, and the more I saw him, I detested him more and more. His face might be reckoned handsome, if any face can be so with wide nostrils,

Madame de Sevigne

and an ill-natured look ; his eyes were fixed, inquisitive, and prying—such a look I have always detested. A look that seems to pry into your soul, naturally excites fear and distrust, even when you have nothing to conceal. The Comte de Coigny had what is called a fine carnation (complexion,) and his healthy color, along with the roughness of his look, gave him, in my eyes, the appearance of a man who blushes from rage. He was not deficient in wit, but it was well suited to his disposition, dry, satirical and severe. The Comte de Coigny became my enemy, and I gained this advantage at least, that I met him much less frequently. The other person whose disposition was repulsive to me, was Madame de Cambis, the sister of the Prince de Chimay and Madame de Caraman ; she was four or five and thirty years of age, and full of affectation. She was strongly marked with the smallpox, her features were common, her height good, with the most disdainful and impertinent carriage that any one ever dared to assume in society. Her friends said that she was very witty, and that she made the most ingenious bon mots. One of them was the following: somebody praising my liveliness in her presence, she replied, "Yes, a gayety of pretty teeth," (*une gaieté de Jolies dents* ;) as much as to say, that I laughed only to show my teeth, a supposition highly unjust, for I never had the slightest affectation, and that was one of the most disagreeable any one could have. Madame de Cambis wrote, it is said, very pretty verses ; but I never knew anything of her composition, except two verses she made on my aunt and the Duc de Guines, and they

were very ill natured, very insipid, badly rhymed, and badly expressed.

I became acquainted with a lady very remarkable for her talents and charming disposition, the Countess de la Marck, sister of the Duke of Noailles; she was old and religious, and never did piety appear in a more lovely form. At her house, I saw the beautiful Madame de Newkerque, afterward Madame de Champcenetz; her beauty was on the wane, but she was still charming. It might be said of her what Madame de Sevigné said of Madame Dufresnoy, the mistress of M. de Louvois, "that she was concentrated in her beauty," (*toute recueillie dans sa beauté.*) It was too evident that she thought of nothing but showing her little feet, her pretty hands, and of attitudinizing—if she had possessed particularly handsome teeth, she would have had the gayety *des jolies dents.* There were some very handsome women at court at this time; amongst others, the Viscountess de Laval, and the Countess Jules, afterward Duchess of Polignac. The shape of the latter was bad, straight but small, without elegance or delicacy; her face would have been faultless, had her forehead been good, but it was large, ill-shaped and rather dark, though the rest of her face was very fair. When the fashion came in of letting the hair fall down over the forehead, almost as low as the eyebrows, her face was really enchanting; there was such a pleasing frankness as well as humor in her expression, and her look and smile were altogether angelic. The portraits of her which are extant, are very ugly, and give not the slightest idea of her charming face. She was of

a sweet and good-natured disposition, of simple, and consequently agreeable manners, and the favor she enjoyed afterward never in the least altered her demeanor. She was said to be without talent; in the intercourse of society I found her neither silly nor incapable.

The Princess of Monaco was then thirty-two years of age; she still looked handsome, principally from her fine complexion; but her face was too wide and her features heavy. One of the finest young ladies of the time was Madame de Marigny, the wife of the brother of the favorite, Madame de Pompadour. She was introduced into society under the auspices of Madame de Serrant, whose husband had been governor of the pages of the Duke of Orléans. There was a rough expression in her face, and something common in her shape, as well as in her whole person; her language was also vulgar and affected; yet she was a woman of talent.

I believe it was this year the King of Denmark visited France. I went to almost all the fêtes that were given to him, and these were of the most magnificent kind. All the ladies were covered with diamonds; those who had none, borrowed them, or hired them from the jewelers. I never saw so many diamonds at one time, particularly at the fête given by the Duke de Villars, and at that of the Palais Royal. At the latter, there were more than twenty ladies whose dresses were trimmed with them. A singular incident relating to this happened to Madame de Berchini. She had a great many diamonds, all borrowed, and amongst the rest, an enormous quantity of chatons, large and small. These were dia-

monds set close to each other, but so detached as to be threaded in the setting under them; they were then put as a border to ribbons, or formed into necklaces with double rows. On her way to the supper-room, amidst a crowd of ladies, Madame de Berchini did her best to restrain an unlucky fit of sneezing, with which she was attacked. She burst the necklace, and though she caught a few of the chatons, the greater part fell on the floor, and were swept along by the majestic trains of the dresses and dominoes. It was impossible to stop for a moment to pick up the scattered diamonds; she was obliged to follow the procession, at the head of which were the King of Denmark and the Duke of Orléans. Poor Madame de Berchini, whose fortune was very small, was wretched at the thought of having to buy diamonds instead of those she had lost; and her misfortune became the subject of conversation during supper. The Duke of Orléans gave orders that a search should be made for the diamonds; and five or six were brought, but the greater part were missing. The duke promised that early next morning a very careful search should be made; but Madame de Berchini had no hopes from the measure, and went away cursing the ball, and all that belonged to it. When she rose next morning, one of the domestics of the Palais Royal brought her all the chatons found in the gallery, the three antechambers, and the dining-room; and she found not only all she lost, but seven small chatons besides, that other ladies had lost, and that were never claimed, though for more than eight days she related this restitution to every one she met.

I had now taken my eldest daughter from nurse, and kept her at home; she delighted me by her beauty, sweetness and charming ways. I went daily to see her asleep in her cradle. There I enjoyed the sweetest meditations I ever made in my life, and formed the most beautiful pictures of imagination; of these she was always the heroine. How many thoughts one has lost at the end of a long life, a thousand times more worthy of preservation than those that have been committed to writing. How cold are the ideas calmly formed, compared to those inspired by the heart alone! Eloquence is only fitted to make others enjoy our thoughts and feelings; but it is an art, and the application it requires always cools down all that we experience. In a long reverie, caused by a profound and legitimate feeling the heart only acts; we are inspired solely by that divine aspiration, that will never die; we are animated solely by a portion of the supreme intelligence; within ourselves, the notion of the language of men is gradually effaced, and finally disappears—all our thoughts are changed into vivid images and deep-felt emotions—and to reduce them into words and sentences, they must be transformed, and how many are there which it would be impossible to find terms to express!—Do the blessed converse in heaven? I cannot think it. There all is infinite, every feeling is unbounded; the praises of the Eternal are only the perfect agreement of the divine and supreme harmony; that of terrestrial music is formed of three sounds given by nature; (each sonorous sound contains them;) that of heaven is formed by three senti-

ments, which are mingled and confounded, and, like the Trinity, form but one life, gratitude and admiration carried to an extreme pitch, of which our most ardent enthusiasm can form no idea. That is the celestial concord—it is all expressive. That is the immortal language of the angels, and of the elect; that is the mark of happiness for eternity!—Here I am far removed from the earth;—but I write these memoirs rapidly and carelessly just as the ideas rise in my imagination; in reading them it must not be forgotten that this is not a literary work.

At the end of the winter my grandmother died; not only did she not leave me a single token of remembrance in her will, but she carried to the tomb the just rights of my mother. M. de Montesson died a short time afterward. He was of the most extraordinary size ever seen. He always seemed to me a very good sort of man, though my aunt amused us by telling innumerable instances of his avaricious disposition, amongst the rest, that at her fête, and on New Year's Day, his only gallantry consisted in giving her a quarter's pin-money in advance. In other respects he kept an excellent house, and was not troublesome in it, for he only appeared at meals, scarcely ever spoke, and withdrew immediately afterward. He gave my aunt four horses, of which she had the sole disposal, and he left her the most full and perfect liberty. He was seventy-eight years of age, with eighty thousand livres a year, when my aunt, in her nineteenth year, preferred him to every other man. During his illness, which lasted eight days, my aunt paid him the utmost attention, but it was all fruitless; he was

ninety years of age, and quietly but religiously breathed his last. I did not leave my aunt during the whole of this time and the three last days I slept in her bed. During these eight days I saw a lady who really was not of this earth, but who, from her earliest infancy, had elevated herself to heaven; this was the sister of M. de Montesson. She was then seventy-two years of age, and must have been very beautiful for she was still handsome, with delicate features and a most wonderfully fair complexion for her age. She never wished to marry; by a sublime vocation, she had, at the age of twelve years, consecrated all her possessions to the poor; when she became of age, she had thirty-six thousand francs a year, and of this she reserved twelve hundred for herself, and gave away all the rest. She had only two rooms to live in, on the third floor, and kept only a servant girl; she never went out but to go to church, to visit the unfortunate prisoners, or the sick. She was commonly on foot, or, if it rained, took a chair. As she never paid visits, I only knew her by reputation, but my aunt had mentioned her to me a thousand times with high veneration. During the eight days of her brother's illness, she passed all her time with us, and I was never weary in regarding her. She was highly agreeable, and I saw something tender in her look and manners; she found that I loved her, (for can we highly revere without affection?) and was greatly affected; she pressed my hand, I kissed hers—I would have kissed her feet. When I asked her one day, why she had not become a nun, she replied: "Because I am fond of prisoners;" this answer made me smile, and

filled me with admiration. I saw that she had preserved her freedom, for the purpose of consoling those who were deprived of it, or to procure their liberation. Every pious soul has its peculiar vocation; it is a celestial inspiration, which no individual, no government should oppose.

The night before the death of M. de Montesson, he seemed so calm, that my aunt and I went to bed at ten o'clock, as we had been up all the preceding night; we left along with him a priest, his nurse and M. de Genlis, who perceived that he had not many hours to live. Being greatly fatigued, my aunt fell asleep the moment she got into bed. A sort of terror kept me awake; we were directly over the dying man's room, and every noise I heard made me tremble; I now and then crossed my hand over my aunt's face, and asked her if she were asleep, which she thought very teasing. At last, at a quarter to one o'clock, I heard a great noise in the house, the room door opens, and we see M. de Genlis appear, who at once informs my aunt that she is a widow. He at the same time gives her notice, that the heirs, aware that M. de Montesson would not survive that night, had placed lawyers in waiting round that house, who had already learned his decease, and were about to seal up everything—that in fact they were now in the dead man's apartment. M. de Genlis requested my aunt to rise immediately but told her to remain in bed, as the legal forms would not take up much time; my aunt rose in haste, put on a gown, while I remained in bed, only opening the curtains a little to see what was

going on. The commissaire, in a large black robe, enters the room with two or three men and puts on the seals; at the very moment they were concluding, my aunt and M. de Genlis went to another apartment, and I began to be a little troubled with the fear of being left alone in this vast chamber; but when the assistants of the commissaire suddenly leave it, and the commissaire himself is about to follow, I become desperately afraid, jump out of bed, lay hold of his robe and scream out, "Monsieur le Commissaire, do not abandon me!" In a moment I was confounded at being in my shift, but I instantly folded myself in the long train of the commissaire, who had not observed me till now, and was terribly afraid; he thought I was a mad woman, and he had cause to think so. M. de Genlis, my aunt, and every one in the house hastened towards the room, and on seeing my singular plight, burst into a loud fit of laughter—never were things sealed up so gayly. I put on my dress while wrapped up in the cloak of the commissaire, for I would not come out of it till I got a petticoat and gown. Some time afterward, M. de Thiars made a very pretty song about this adventure.

We set out for Vincennes, where we spent ten days with my grand-aunt, Mademoiselle Dessaleux, who, after my grandmother's death, had obtained large and magnificent apartments in the castle. The Duke of Orleans came to Vincennes to see my aunt, but I perceived a slight shade of coolness in his manner, which evidently did not escape her notice. I believe that he was afraid of her schemes after the death of M. de Montesson, and

she herself was convinced that some one had warned him to beware of her ambitious views. As she had nobody here with whom she could talk of her conjectures, she at last made me her confidant, but, in her usual way, trying to deceive me as to a thousand circumstances. Since I had read "Mariane" I perfectly knew her mind, and was nowise her dupe. When once we have the key of fictitious characters, with very little talent we can find out their views more easily than those of others, for with them everything is a matter of calculation: to ascertain their intentions, we have only to think of the interests that occupy their minds. My aunt assured me that she was totally devoid of ambition, and was anxious for nothing but quiet and independence; that being young possessed of an agreeable rank in society, and of forty thousand livres a year, were she, with her disposition, to commit the folly of marrying again, all the sacrifices would be on her side, and she would never make such enormous sacrifices but to a very strong passion, or to snatch from the depths of despair an honorable man, whose previous constancy she had perfectly experienced. Such was exactly her language. From all her rambling talk, I could only obtain the assurance that she was firmly resolved to try everything, and to execute everything in her power for the purpose of marrying the Duke of Orleans. She spoke with great spite of the embarrassed air he had shown: "I am sure," said she, "that some one at the Palais Royal is trying to keep him from me—I suspect Madame Barbantane and M. de Pont (she was not mistaken) I am supposed to have plans which I am incapable of forming.

All these people would have been delighted at seeing me his mistress, that was better than marquise; but they cannot bear the idea of seeing me at an elevation that would put them all in my dependence—yet they witnessed the frankness of my conduct toward the Duke of Orleans, and that I did not conceal from him my sentiment for the Duc de Guines,—if that has not cured him, it is not my fault. Finally, I will prove that I have no designs on him—I will give him up to his own management—I am going to Barrège."

In thus forming her resolution, my aunt imagined that the Duke of Orleans could not bear her absence, that the trial would teach him that he could not do without her; and that finally, she could say on her return, that she was altogether cured of her unfortunate passion. In all this scheming my aunt ran much greater risks than she imagined; and in the result she was more fortunate than skillful. Nothing could be more ridiculous than the way in which she talked to me of the whole of this business. With any other confidant she would have employed infinitely more cunning, but to me she spoke nearly as openly as if she had been alone, with the exception of two or three phrases declarative of her being without schemes or ambition. In other respects, she showed me all her ill-will against the persons she imagined opposed to her views; and did not take the trouble of concealing her anxiety and agitation. She did not find me devoid of sense; but without reflecting that I had been married at seventeen, and was now twenty-two, she saw nothing in me but my childish live-

liness of mind, my simplicity in several ways, my appearance, that was more girlish than my age, my timidity in high circles, my wild gayety when at my ease, my fear of ghosts—in a word, she considered me only as a pretty child, an Agnès a little altered in manners by intercourse with society. As she never read herself, she asked me no questions about my studies, and I never said a word to her on the subject. Thus she could form no idea of the knowledge I might have acquired. She knew only that I had written songs at Sillery, and that I was acquainted with the rules of poetry, but she held this kind of *succèss de societé* in little esteem. We returned to Paris, whence she was to set out for Barrège.

The simplicity of my manners led my aunt to make me a constant witness of her artifices which were sometimes of the most refined, sometimes of the most childish kind. One of the latter amused me too much for me ever to forget the slightest particular connected with it. She was trying to convince the Duke of Orleans that her unfortunate sentiment deprived her of sleep and appetite; that she could no longer either eat or sleep. In his presence she was certainly rigorously abstemious—but she made amends in his absence. It is true, that she never sat down to table in her own house; but though she had no regular formal meals, she partook of food five or six times a day. One evening that I was with her, whilst we were certainly not expecting the duke, Mademoiselle Legrand, her waiting maid, entered the room with a large silver porringer holding some roast meat prepared with wine. In a careless and unwilling manner

my aunt put the porringer on her lap, and by an effort of reason began to eat the roast meat, not a third of which remained when a carriage was heard entering the court. I hastened to the window, and said that it was the Duke of Orleans. My aunt rang the bell with violence, but Mademoiselle Legrand did not hurry herself, and when she came, said, that the duke was immediately behind her. My aunt thinks of nothing but of getting rid of the remains of the rotie, hastily orders it to be taken away, and then, thinking the servants would meet the duke, she calls back Mademoiselle Legrand, and sharply bids her put the fatal porringer, cover and all, under the bed. She is obeyed ; but at the same moment, the folding-door opens wide and the duke appears. He perceived the odor of the wine, and my aunt admitted that she had taken a small spoonful of it. Her worn out and languid look during the visit so inclined me to laughter, that I had great difficulty in restraining myself. Such is the excessive abasement and childishness to which people of talent may be led by ambitious schemes when they consider these means useful to their advancement.

My aunt wished to keep me with her until she set out for Barrège. She gave me the apartment of M. de Montesson, and told me that my waiting-maid should have a mattress placed beside my bed. This was in the beginning of April, and M. de Genlis had just set out to join his regiment. We returned from Vincennes at night. My aunt wished immediately to put me in possession of my apartment, which was on the ground floor.

She asked me if I was afraid ; I said that I was not, and to show my courage, I told her she had only to follow me, for I would go in first, and without a light. The footman was behind me with two lights, and I advanced boldly into the open antechamber, but scarcely had I put one foot in, than I leaped back with a frightful scream, for I had felt distinctly, a large, cold and bony hand spread against my face, and pushing me back. I almost swooned away in the arms of my aunt, who was greatly frightened at my dreadful agitation. She saw that something very strange must have happened and inquired what it was. I told her, with trembling accents, that a skeleton hand had pushed me back. The footman entered with the lights, and immediately saw the cause of the pretended prodigy. It was a withered orange tree, that had been placed near the door, and one of the branches, stiff and dry, spread itself out before the door so as to come against my face. To the touch this branch really produced the illusion of a skeleton hand. Every one tried it and they admitted that in a dead man's apartment, a person possessed with the fear of ghosts, would be as much terrified at this branch pressing against him as by the most horrible apparition.

My aunt set out for Barrège, but informed me that the Duke of Orleans would often come to see me till Madame de Puisieux took me to Sillery, and added, that at his age, and with his well-known attachment for her, there was nothing wrong in me receiving him. He had never come to my house but once, at my last confinement, and then he came with the prince, his son. My

aunt desired me to speak often to him about her, and to mention all our conversations in my letters. She again said that she wished he were quickly cured of his passion, if he were not such as he had first imagined, for it was terrible to afflict one's self so much as she did for troubles that perhaps were imaginary after all. I asked her what she would do if the passion were incurable. "Ah!" said she, "who can foresee? I only know that my fate will be altered." I knew what she meant, and promised to follow her intention, by relating the whole to the Duke of Orleans, for she had allowed me to tell him frankly the state of her heart. I was desirous that all these manœuvres might be successful, first, because I knew that it was my aunt's ardent wish; secondly, because I was not indifferent to the pleasure of having an aunt married to a prince of the blood; and lastly, because I was proud of being in some sort a negotiator in the business, at least during my aunt's absence at Barrège.

I returned with great joy to my house in the Rue Saint Dominique, where I found my charming Caroline, whom I left to my mother's care, during my absence. The Duke of Orleans came to see me the day after my aunt's departure. I felt pretty well at my ease, because I had constantly seen him at my aunt's, but he had never heard me converse, and only knowing me by her account, he considered me a lively, open-hearted, and agreeable young woman, but totally incapable of observation or reflection. For my own part, the idea of these private conversations rather embarrassed me; I was not very

sure how I should succeed. His first address made me smile, for he brought me a great quantity of sugar candy of Fontainebleau, and told me that he remembered that I had often asked him for some. However, in about a quarter of an hour's time, he remembered that he was afflicted by my aunt's departure, and spoke much about her, but I did not perceive any very lively passion in his heart, nor even a real attachment. His visit lasted only three quarters of an hour, and on leaving me, he said he would return in two days. His second visit was spirited; we first talked of my aunt; I praised her attachment to him, and he listened to me with a look of surprise at hearing me reason so seriously. I talked alone for a long time, and in such a romantic style as seemed wonderful to him. At last I stopped to receive his compliments on my eloquence. He then told me, with a mournful look, that he had never been loved for himself. I was greatly surprised at this, but he often repeated it afterward. I opposed his notion, but made no great impression. He gradually changed the subject of conversation, and all at once began to relate to me his good fortune with the ladies; but his stories were always jumbled with the adventures of the Baron de Bezenval. His details, though very decorous in language, were horribly full of scandal, and were told with such simplicity, that I listened to them with great curiosity, unmixed with embarrassment. I am certain that the whole was true, for it was not boasting, but merely talkativeness and indiscretion. My astonishment was expressed in my looks, and highly diverted the duke; I must confess that

I even asked the names of the parties, and, after promising secrecy, (which I have never broken,) the whole was confided to me. It may be necessary to state that all the heroines of these stories were women of very bad character, and that there were some of them even who had been hooted out of good company; but still there were a few to be met with in society and at court.

During a month, the duke regularly returned every two days to refresh my memory with these topics, and at last had such confidence in me, that he told me all his troublesome adventures with the late duchess. At the age of nineteen he had married her for love, and their love was mutual and unbounded until the birth of his son, which for a time still added to its force. She even displayed so little modesty in the violence of her affection, that the Duchess de Tollard said, "That she had succeeded in rendering the marriage union indecent." Hitherto the Duchess of Orleans had been the most loving and irreproachable wife imaginable; but, all of a sudden, she desired the duke to give her all the letters she had written to him, which were all equally tender. She wished, she said, to have the pleasure of reading them over with the answers, which she carefully preserved. The duke gave them, but desired her to take great care of them, and return them quickly; but her only object in asking for them was to destroy the whole, for her heart was changed, and she wished to annihilate the proofs of a sentiment which no longer survived. In this retrograde inconstancy, desirous of destroying the remnants of the past, in this shame of a legitimate at-

tachment, and in the whole of this proceeding, there was such a combination of perfidiousness and depravity, that I was more struck with it than by the recital of his adventures. The duke likewise told me how he had become in love with my aunt, which was more singular than romantic. He told me that he found her charming, but they were very ceremonious in their intercourse; and far from being in love with her, his mind was then occupied with another lady—that was at the time of his first journey to Villers-Coterets. One day, while deer hunting in the forest, Madame de Montesson was on horseback, and the duke happened to be close beside her at the very moment that the chase had become confused, and when the other lady, who was likewise on horseback, was far off in another avenue. One of the huntsmen proposed to the duke to wait there a few minutes, whilst he went forward to learn what had become of the stag and the hounds; he agreed, and dismounting from his horse at the same time with my aunt, went to sit down in a pretty little spot under the shade. The duke was fat, and the weather sultry; being excessively tired, and in the most violent perspiration, he requested the liberty of taking off his neckcloth, unbuttoned his coat, stretched himself, puffed and breathed in such an unceremonious and ludicrous manner, that my aunt burst out into a fit of laughter, and called him a *gros père* with such a charming liveliness and gayety, that his heart was instantly taken by surprise and he became in love with her. Nothing produces a more certain effect on princes than unexpected familiarity, gracefully succeeding re-

spectful and reserved demeanor in their presence. This rise of a great passion was not less singular however. The manner certainly did not belong to the age of Louis XIV., but taste had at this period lost much of its purity and elegance.

The letters of the Duke of Orleans to my aunt during her journey were not at all satisfactory; one of them so displeased her, that she wrote to me that she saw clearly he had none of the sentiments with which she thought him inspired. In this letter she could not conceal her spite; and in speaking of the duke, called him that light man (*cet homme leger*—inconsiderate). I could not help laughing at the expression, so inappropriate whether we consider his mental or his physical qualities. The duke treated a love-affair as an amusement, and never was the first to break it off. As long as the lady was near him, or listening to his conversation, he was constant; in fact, he was in love like a good soldier at his post, he entered into another service without chagrin or regret. He was never truly in love in the whole course of his life. If, at the time I am speaking of, an agreeable woman had been desirous of occupying the vacant place, nothing could have been easier. I wrote to my aunt to tell her that she was still adored, and to press her to hasten her return. She followed my advice.

During more than a month, I received regular visits from the duke. In this interval, there was a fête at court, a grand masked ball, but I forget the occasion of it. The duke requested me to get Madame de Puisieux to take my to it, where he agreed to meet me. I never

saw such a large company as at this ball. I went in a dress domino, with only a small mask, (called a loup), that concealed nothing but my eyes and nose. Besides myself, Madame de Puisieux took with her, her niece, Madame de St. Chamand and the Marquis de Bouzoles, to give us his arm. We sat down on a bench in the least crowded room we could find. In half an hour the duke arrived, concealed in a mask and domino; it was not difficult to recognize him, for he looked like a huge tower. He offered to take me into the other rooms, and promised to bring me back in an hour. I put myself under his protection, and while we were moving forward, one of the masqueraders turned towards him, and exclaimed, "Make room for the cathedral of Rheims," which made every one laugh, even the duke himself, who said, that such a respectable similitude was excellent in so great a crowd. We passed through two large rooms without accident, but about the middle of the third, immediately adjoining that in which was the royal family, I was suddenly snatched from the duke's arm. I was pulled backwards and forwards, according to the current, for many were going back; I was pushed forwards, driven back, squeezed, and lifted off my feet. In this crisis, I looked around me for the duke, but I had quite lost sight of him, and my fear was extreme, when all at once, a person in a blue domino, very tall and thin, pushed every one aside, flew towards me, and laying hold of me as if I had been a puppet, pulled me away with the most violent impetuosity and finally carried me into the royal apartment. I had given up every idea of

dancing or seeing sights. I leaned against the wall, and felt extremely unwell. At last I began to breathe freely, and to express my gratitude to my liberator; when he spoke, and I recognized my friend's brother-in-law, the Viscount de Custine, only eight days returned from Corsica, where he had shown the most distinguished bravery. The moment at which this discovery was made, was highly disagreeable to me, and I shall state my reasons. It is the only incident of the kind which I shall relate, but the story is too moral to be omitted; and at any rate, it will appear by the way in which it ended, that vanity could not excite me to repeat the particulars. When I had somewhat recovered from my fright, I requested to be led back to Madame de Puisieux, but we did not return by the way we came, as the viscount took me round by private passages. In them we found a very pretty lady from Bourdeaux, named Madame Rousse de Corse, who had been carried out wounded and insensible; as if from a field of battle, from the horrible crowd we had traversed. The poor lady had fallen, and been trampled on; she was in a most pitiable state. A surgeon was sent for, and she was bled on the spot. I shuddered when I looked at her, and greatly pleased the viscount, who wished to prevent me stopping, by telling him that I wished to look at all I had been saved from by his kindness.

The Duke of Orleans set out for Villers-Coterets on the 6th of May, and a few days afterward Madame de Puisieux took me thither to spend a fortnight. We found a large company collected; amongst others, was

the Marquise de Boufflers, mother of the celebrated Chevalier de Boufflers; she was witty and satirical, but her daughter, Madame de Cussé, afterward called Madame de Boisgelin, was neither the one nor the other, which seemed very singular in such a family. The Count de Maillebois was likewise of the party; he was thought to be a man of talent; I never perceived it, but found him very tiresome. We had M. de Castries, afterward Marshal of France, whose manners and conversation I greatly liked. His talents were solid as well as agreeable; his wish to please, mild, calm, without pertness, or forwardness, unruffled by vanity, springing solely from good-nature, and not from self-love that wished to dazzle and to carry everything before it. Another guest, the Baron de Bezenval, whom I had already seen a thousand times in society. He was of the same age as the Duke of Orleans, but his person was still charming, and he was a great favorite with the ladies. So excessively ignorant was he, that he could scarcely write a card, yet he had just that kind of talent necessary for telling trifles gracefully and politely. He was said to be bad-hearted, he was certainly thoughtless and dissipated; his demeanor was pleasing, where his interest did not clash, and his conversation sensible, when there was nobody present whom he could ridicule; to us, his frank ways, unaffected disposition, and lively gayety, made him highly agreeable. The Marquis du Châtelet and his lady were likewise of the party. The marchioness was one of the worthiest persons at court, and the same may be said of her husband. If we had believed the story told about

his birth, we might have been surprised at his mild disposition and not very bright mind; but his judgment was sound, his heart excellent, and the constancy of his friendship for the Duc de Choiseul offered a splendid example to the courtiers. Monsieur and Madame de Vaupalière were likewise at Villers-Coterets all the time we remained. The husband would have been very agreeable, had it not been for his propensity to play, which formed not only his happiness, but sole occupation. He would have disgusted our romantiques with reverie, but he thought only of play. His lady was charming, though more than forty; she had those graces that do not become old, an unaffected disposition, lively wit, original character, and the most even and agreeable temper ever seen.

It was here that I learned all the advantage of having for a mentor a person really desirous of displaying the accomplishments of the lady she introduces into society. I was highly successful, not only with my harp, singing, and the making of proverbs, but I was much praised for my talent and conversation, though they were both common enough. When I wished to withdraw at eleven o'clock, as usual, I was forcibly detained; what I said was repeated and praised, and words of it quoted next day, and most commonly these pretended bon mots were not worth the trouble. For this success I was wholly indebted to Madame de Puisieux and the Duke of Orleans, who were always talking of my agreeable ways. They would scarcely let us go at the end of twelve days. I had often spoken to the Duke of Orleans

about my aunt, in our walks on the terrace of the château of Villers-Coterets. I remarked that a letter announcing her return in three weeks had renewed his flame; he was in love again, for fear of being pouted; he promised to write me, and kept his word.

On leaving Villers-Coterets we did not go to Sillery, as Madame de Puisieux wished to make me acquainted with Vaudreuil, the finest estate in Normandy; or rather, she wished to show me off in a castle where agreeable accomplishments and fêtes were esteemed, and with the society of which I was not acquainted, because it was not one which she generally frequented. We were to stay only eight days at Vaudreuil, but we remained five weeks, and they were the pleasantest I ever spent in my life. The master of the château was the President Portal, an old gentleman, witty, gay and good-natured. We found most excellent company, fond of amusement, and, among the rest, a relation of the president, formerly very celebrated for her beauty. She was then fifty; her first husband was M. Amelot, minister of foreign affairs; when she became a widow, she swore that she would preserve her freedom, and she kept it long; at last she saw at Vaudreuil, M. Damézague, fifteen years younger than herself. She was so greatly prepossessed against him, that she wished to leave the house the moment he arrived; but in eight days he was able to overcome all her prepossessions, and to make her in love with him—within that time the proud widow married him in the chapel of the castle. They had been three years married when we found them at Vaudreuil, and they lived together like

two turtle-doves. Madame Damézague was extremely beautiful; her husband was handsome, and one of the tenderest and affectionate of partners. He had the most lively, juvenile way I ever saw; thought of nothing but amusement, was always playing tricks or giving fêtes, and had always some plan of diversion in his mind. After a day of the most delightful amusement, he would ask in the evening, "What shall we do to-morrow morning?" It was necessary to tell him to keep him quiet; without a fixed plan of the kind, he could not have slept. Of the singular marriage of Madame Damézague, I formed the novel entitled "Les Preventions d'une Femme," which M. Radet has turned into a very pretty vaudeville.

Amidst the gay society of Vaudreuil, I particularly remarked a young lady, whose lovely form and pleasing manners struck me with admiration. This was the Comtesse de Merode, (afterward Comtesse de Lannoy,) she was three years older than me, with a most beautiful shape, a fine face, clever disposition, most lively imagination, and a thousand engaging qualities. She inspired me with a strong affection at first sight, and this I have always felt for every person I have ever loved. On her I produced the same effect, and the same evening she took me to her room, where we sat up together until three in the morning. It would seem that such lively impressions, such quick friendships, would belong only to the period of youth, yet I have always preserved them, and never love any one for whom I do not feel an immediate attachment. Next morning, M. Damézague

came to ask what we would do in the evening, when I proposed to make proverbs, but he affirmed that no one in the château could do them, and added, with a smile, that I ought to make out one by myself to give them a lesson. I answered that the thing was not impossible. I tried, and invented my famous scene of La Cloison, which I performed so often afterward, and out of which I subsequently made two little plays, that have been imitated on the stage, particularly in Aucassin and Nicolétte. My Cloison was so successful, that it was played five or six days successively, as an afterpiece we gave a burlesque song, very drolly given by M. Damézague, with the accompaniment of the harp. I formed a small company for the purpose of making up proverbs, and Madame de Merode did great credit to my lessons. We had charming walks and rides in the park, which was of immense extent and admirable beauty. We heard often of a neighboring mountain called the Montagne des deux Amans, famous for its immense height, extensive prospect, the difficulty of ascending it, and, above all, by the tradition that explains its title of "The Two Lovers' Mountain." The tale goes, that in olden times, it was called the "Inaccessible Mountain," on account of the supposed impossibility of reaching its summit. A young shepherd of the valley could only obtain the hand of a girl with whom he was in love by carrying her thither on his shoulders; and this condition, it was thought, would put an end to the connection; but love hesitates at nothing, and the lovers accepted the condition, to the great astonishment of the inhabitants of the valley.

The lover places his beloved on his shoulders, thinks he could carry her thus to the world's end, and that so sweet a load would reanimate him were his strength to fail. He laughs at the mortal anxiety of his relations and friends, sets out in triumph, and climbs the mountain; but, at the top of the highest ridge, while making the last step which raises him to the summit—he breathes his last! Such is the tradition which looks like an allegory; for, in fact, does not love promise everything, undertake everything, and, having obtained everything, immediately expire! The tale adds, that the young girl, in her despair, leaped into the river that flows at the foot of the rugged mountain, which, henceforth, was called the Montagne des deux Amans. On this romantic foundation, I wrote out, in two days, a drama which I read to Madame de Merode, the Comte de Caraman, (brother of the marquis and nephew of the President Portal,) and M. Damézague. They found the play excellent, and we settled that it should be performed; while Comte de Caraman had a charming little theatre erected in the orangerie. In the meantime, Madame de Merode and I determined on climbing the mountain; but as the president's postillion had broken his leg on it only two months before, I knew that Madame de Puisieux would be opposed to our undertaking, so we kept it secret, and agreed to have it done before she rose in the morning. The mountain is noways inaccessible, but only very tedious and fatiguing to climb. We knew that there was a hermitage on the top, so that we were very sure that we could do what had been done by hermits, or rather, by

monks, for it was a small convent. We rose at daylight, and by five o'clock Madame de Merode, M. de Caraman, M. Damézague and I had reached the foot of the mountain. We were forced to stop half way, for Madame de Merode, not much accustomed to walking, was quite worn out. At last we reached the top, and found some good-natured monks, who were delighted at seeing us, and who gave us some goats' milk for breakfast, which we found delicious. Their little convent was placed amidst the tableland of the mountain, and was really charming. The most delightful was to be seen on every side. These pious hermits still hovered over the world they had left —they only saw on its surface its most virtuous features, the labors of the fields. I envied their dwelling and their tranquillity ; for even amidst the tumult of society and dissipation, I have never, without the profoundest emotion, caught a glimpse of unbroken solitude and uninterrupted repose. I did not then foresee, that twenty years afterward, this convent would be destroyed, and its virtuous inhabitants dispersed—perhaps put to death!

The theatre was finished in a week, for the works were carried on night and day, and decorations ready made were brought from Rouen. I distributed the characters of my play in the interval; mine was that of an old enchanter, two hundred years old, supposed to be placed on the inaccessible mountain, where he was to remain until the arrival of two perfect lovers, whom he had been looking for for more than a hundred and fifty years; I was delighted with the character, because I had a white beard and a wig. Madame de Merode and M. de Cara-

man were the two lovers. My play ended happily, for the lovers survived, to serve as models to the lovers of future ages, and the perfection of their mutual love removed the enchantment from the old hermit of the mountain. The play was full of agreeable illusions to the master of the house, and every one of the party. It may be supposed that nothing was wanting to its complete success, and that the author was loudly called for; we were required to perform it again, but Madame de Puisieux found the play too short, and desired me to lengthen it. Every one called on me to perform Roxelane in the "Trois Sultanes," for I was so often compared to Roxelane in my youth, that I was as much tired of this kind of compliment, as with hearing it said that I certainly played better on the harp than King David. As we had not a copy of the "Trois Sultanes," M. de Caraman sent a messenger to Paris for one, and for several other things, amongst the rest for bagpipes, for mine were at Sillery with my trunks. But I told our performers that I would write a comedy of the "Trois Sultanes" with the same incidents, but an entirely different plot. I wrote it in six or seven days, in three acts, and in prose, with interludes. It was learned in proportion as I wrote it. It was quite different from Favart's play; I do not think it was good, but I believe the dialogue was pretty and there certainly was some action and interest in the plot, entirely wanting in Favart. I took a very brilliant character, in which I sang, danced, played on the harpsichord, the harp, the guitar, the bagpipes, the tabor, and the viol. The last two instruments we got

from Rouen, and nothing but the top of my viol was wanting, but I had not played on it for more than three years, and my mandoline would not have done well after my guitar, on which I played infinitely better. M. de Nedonchel, who came to join us from Paris, took a character, while Madame de Merode played extremely well in the part of a Spanish lady in love with a young Frenchman, performed by M. de Caraman. A young man from a small town adjoining (Pont-de-l'Arche) played charmingly the character of the Grand Seigneur. With the new play we again performed my "Montagne des deux Amans." The whole was so successful, that the tumult of applause made Madame de Puisieux burst into tears, and this was the true success I wished for. After supper, I accompanied her to her room, while Madame de Merode was vainly waiting for me, for I remained with Madame de Puisieux till daybreak. How she loved me!—as I have since loved!—how grateful I felt for her kindness! how dear to me was this virtuous and affectionate guide! Her features, her smile, her dress, the sound of her voice, and all our private conversations, are unalterably engraved in my remembrance—and above all, the conversation of that night, in which she showed so much tenderness towards me! She held my hands in hers, looked to me with inexpressible affection, and often repeated these memorable words: "Yes, you will have an extraordinary destiny!—but what will it be?" Her tone indicated alarm for my future happiness—alas! it was a presentiment.

We performed our little play three times over, with

only a day of interval between each performance; people came to see it not only from Pont-de-l'Arche, but from Rouen, and the crowd was very great at the two last performances. We then put a plan into execution, the thought of which alone delighted me—that was to go to Dieppe to see the ocean, which I had never seen. The only difficulty was to get Madame de Puisieux to take us thither, for she would not have let me gone without her. One morning I told Madame de Merode and M. de Caraman that I would try the negotiation in the course of the day. They thought I would do so in private, and, to their great surprise, it was in the drawing-room after dinner, and before all the company. I approached Madame de Puisieux, and called out to her to be on her guard, for I had resolved to employ all my cunning to circumvent her: she laughed, and replied gracefully as usual. I then told her that I was passionately desirous of seeing the sea, when she interrupted me at once, and exclaimed, "Very well, we shall go to Dieppe to-morrow." I was so much affected by her kindness that my eyes were instantly filled with tears, but ashamed of my weakness, I inclined my face in her hand to conceal my emotion; she felt the tears falling on her hand, and said, "Come, lift up your head." I obeyed, and the company saw that I was crying. She affectionately embraced me again and again. "See," said she, "if I can refuse you anything." There was nobody present but persons well inclined towards me, and this scene greatly affected them.

Madame de Puisieux, Madame de Merode, M. de Car-

aman, and I set out next day at twelve o'clock, in a berline. We were escorted by Messrs. Damézague and M. de Nedonchel, who during the whole way got to the post-houses before us for the purpose of playing off the wildest stratagems, that kept us in a roar of laughter. Our stay at Dieppe was equally gay. My surprise, admiration, and awe were extreme at the aspect of the ocean, seen for the first time from the pier of Dieppe, whence it is seen in all its majesty. I missed only one circumstance—that of being alone. I confess that the noisy gayety of my companions was highly disagreeable to me on this occasion. Whilst contemplating this wonderful sight, I was hurt at hearing laughter and ridicule around me, as if we were in a drawing-room or by the fireside; and they were equally astonished with my grave looks, and agreed that I was very dull on the seashore. I took a little voyage which did not turn out well, for I became so terribly sick that we were obliged to gain the shore after having been out no further than a league. We visited the shops, which were full of pretty articles in ivory, and Madame de Puisieux gave me an immense quantity. With fish we made excellent cheer; spent a whole day at Dieppe; and, delighted with our journey, returned to Vaudreuil, where new fêtes were in preparation.

While in the drawing-room after dinner, the day after our return, the president received a letter which he read aloud informing him that pirates had seen Madame de Merode and me at sea, and intended to carry us off to take us to the Grand Seigneur's seraglio. We were not

greatly alarmed at this; however we asked him how we could preserve ourselves from so imminent a danger, and he replied that he saw no other way than to get ourselves received as vestals in the temple of the petit bois. This was a charming hut formed like a temple, and placed in a part of the garden near the castle; it was called the convent, was surrounded with walls, and completely secluded, for it was in the president's private garden which he carefully kept under lock and key, and which nobody entered but in his company. He had taken us thither several times to breakfast. It was settled that at eight o'clock next evening we should be received into the temple of Vesta. M. de Caraman led us thither, and immediately disappeared. We found the temple adorned with flowers, and all the ladies of the party dressed as vestals, with Madame de Puisieux at their head as high priestess, and the president as high priest. He was the only man present within the enclosure. A harangue was delivered, and Madame de Vougny recited some very pretty verses. The ceremony of our reception was gone through. Daylight was fast disappearing, when we heard, all at once, very noisy music in the Turkish style, and messengers came around us on all hands to say that the Grand Seigneur was coming in person, with a great escort, to carry off all the vestals from the temple. Our high priest showed on this occasion a firmness worthy of his rank, for he declared that the gates should not be opened. Meanwhile the terrible music was approaching with alarming rapidity, and the Turks soon made thundering knocks at the gates. To

avoid a scene that I disliked beforehand, I advised that the gates should be opened, and that we should surrender at discretion; but the president was firmly attached to his own plan, and fond of the pantomime, so that he reproached me with cowardice, and made the sultan be informed that the spot was consecrated ground. Thereupon, though the walls were pretty high, all the Turks jumped over immediately, several among them (who were servants or peasants) carrying torches; the gates were opened; more than three hundred Turks entered the garden; the gentlemen of the party carried off the ladies; the rest carried off about a dozen waiting-maids, who had been mingled with us to increase our number. I always hated confusion and tumult, even in games, and this noisy party both displeased and frightened me, for I was afraid there might be some legs broken; and at seeing some Turks approach the vestals rather roughly, I thought the whole plan abominable. While in this bad humor, by the light of the torches I perceived M. de Caraman all glittering with gold and jewels, (but who did not look well in his turban,) and approaching me with an air of triumph, that roused my anger. I absolutely refused to be carried off, and this in such a rude way that he was greatly hurt. He laid hold of me, I resisted, pinched, scratched, and kicked his legs until he got into a passion, and then carried me off in spite of all my resistance. I was placed on a magnificent palanquin, while the sultan followed me on foot, and reproached me bitterly. Seeing, however, that I ought not to spoil the fête by teasing him who really gave it,

and who had become the hero only to make me queen, I endeavored to laugh it off, and succeeded in appeasing him. All the ladies were placed in charming palanquins, and the Turks followed on foot with a band of music playing. In this manner we traversed throughout the whole length of these magnificent gardens which were brilliantly illuminated. The prospect was delightful. We found, at the extremity of the park, a splendid ball-room, with plenty of orange-trees, garlands of flowers, designs and refreshments. The Grand Seigneur declared me his favorite sultana, and we danced all night. I have had many fêtes given me in the course of my life, but I never saw any so ingenious and delightful as this.

Three or four days afterward we set out for Sillery. Though I had spent at Vaudreuil the most dissipated five weeks of my life, yet I never omitted reading every morning during my toilette. I took with me the "Revolutions de Suede" of the Abbé de Vertot; and as the president had some books, I read also the "Conjuration de Bedmar contre Venise," and again read over the "Pensees du Comte Orenstiern," which I had formerly read. Our adieus at parting were very affectionate; we promised to meet again at Paris, and to become inseparable —but in the confusion of high society, each was carried in a different direction, and we saw each other no more. This was not the case with Madame de Merode and me, for Madame de Puisieux invited her to Sillery, which she promised and performed.

In going through Rheims, Madame de Puisieux agreed

to let me spend eight days with my kind and charming grandmother, Madame de Droménil. I then went to Sillery where I found a large company assembled. There were M. de la Roche Aimon, Archbishop of Rheims, a prelate of haughty look, virtuous, austere, of great talents; his coadjuteur, M. de Talleyrand, who was designed for a clergyman, and already *en soutane*, though only twelve or thirteen years of age. He was a little lame, was pale and silent, but his countenance was agreeable, and indicative of a talent for observation. There were likewise at Sillery the Duc d'Aumont, an excellent and sensible man, said not to be very clever in society, but this is always said of those who do not possess external accomplishments, who do not shine in conversation, and who are always judicious in their opinions: the Maréchal d'Etrée and his lady; M. Damecourt, a very witty lawyer, who with rather a ludicrous shape, was a man *à bonnes* fortunes; the old Princess de Ligne, who had the ugliest face of a woman of fifty I ever saw; a fat, shining countenance, without rouge, lividly pale, and adorned with three chins, one below the other; Monsieur and Madame d'Egmont, Mademoiselle de Sillery, sister of M. de Puisieux, a real saint, as witty and amiable as she was pious, kind and virtuous; my brother-in-law and his lady; Monsieur and Madame de Louvois, the latter in bad health; the Marquis de Souvré, with his daughters, the nieces of Madame de Puisieux; Mesdames de Sailly and de St. Chamand; the Comte de Rochefort; M. Conway, son of the Marquis of Hertford, formerly English ambassador at the court of France;

and the old Duke of Villars, who rouged, painted his eyebrows, and kept little cotton balls in his mouth for the purpose of swelling out his cheeks.

This journey, like the former, was full of amusements and fêtes of my inventing. We performed the two plays I had written at Vaudreuil, the Deux Sultanes and Montagne des deux Amans, along with the Folies Amoureuses of Regnard. In July, M. de Genlis returned from his regiment, and two days afterward I was highly delighted with the arrival of Madame de Merode, who was a useful and agreeable addition to our projected fêtes. She remained till the middle of September, after which I went to Louvois for ten days and then returned to Sillery.

I have not yet mentioned an individual who was established in the house of M. de Puisieux, who nevertheless requires particular notice. This was M. Tiquet, who had formerly been secretary of embassy to M. de Puisieux and had preserved a most exclusive and passionate attachment to his master. He was about fifty years of age, of great probity, well informed and a very worthy man, but had the most ridiculous appearance imaginable. He was very tall, very thin, with square, flat shoulders of the most singular kind, and a neck for length out of all bounds. Above this neck appeared a bloated face, with a huge nose, small round bluish eyes, without eyelids or eyebrows and an enormously large mouth, the whole surmounted with a light colored wig, covered with pomatum and slightly powdered. He always wore a tight gray coat buttoned from top to bottom—and never was

a more singular picture of finished ugliness. But though I was surprised at his way, I did not dislike him; for there was nothing ill-natured or concealed in his look, and his smile indicated humor and single-mindedness. In truth, M. Tiquet smiled but seldom, for he was of a grave, silent and solemn disposition; and having never been a favorite of ladies, though he did not absolutely hate them, he teased them always, particularly when they were young and goodlooking. As for the old ladies he delighted in contradicting them. He did this even to Madame de Puisieux, who was not backward in answering him, though she often thought him perfectly insufferable. Their discussions were never violent, deference being paid on one hand and politeness on the other; but still there was a great degree of tartness displayed on both sides. During my first stay at Sillery, M. de Puisieux told me one morning, whilst riding out with him, that I had made, if not a very brilliant, certainly a very wonderful conquest—of M. Tiquet; and that I was indebted for it to the correct nature of my studies, for he alone was acquainted with them, as he kept the key of the library, and lent me the books I asked for. M. de Puisieux added, that M. Tiquet had said, that when my youthful vivacity had gone by, I should become a woman of great merit. But he did not tell M. de Puisieux a circumstance, for which, in his own mind he prized me more highly than for my correct studies, I mean, that in his disputes with Madame de Puisieux, I never said he was in the wrong, when she asked my opinion, for I thought she often pressed him too hard and very often she decided in his favor.

In this, as in many other circumstances, I greatly admired the excellent temper of Madame de Puisieux, who never became angry on this account. When M. de Puisieux told her, in my presence that I had completely subjugated the flexible heart of M. Tiquet, she replied, with a smile, that I had used plenty of coquetry for the purpose. Two days afterwards I actually did make use of some coquetry. I asked him for the "Traité de Westphalié," a book he held in the highest esteem, which he knew by heart, and was continually quoting. My credit with him, from that moment, was unbounded, his eye constantly followed me in the drawing-room and when he saw me playing tricks, he smiled, and more than once was actually seen to laugh. What gave me great pleasure was, that Madame de Puisieux, in seeing the strong interest he displayed for me, lost all her ill-will towards him; he perceived the change, and became much more agreeable in his intercourse with her.

Besides the kindness of Madame de Puisieux, what most contributed in rendering Sillery dear to me, was that during the three successive years I made such protracted visits, I never had the smallest difference with the inmates, nor perceived the slightest feeling of envy towards me. Madame and M. de Puisieux himself had shown me kindness they had never shown to any one and this preference, displayed on all occasions, often in spite of my remonstrances, never raised the slightest invidious feeling. It is true that the Maréchale d'Etrée, and the nieces of Madame de Puisieux, so kind to me at all times, were fifteen or twenty years older than me; but

my sister-in-law and Madame de Louvois were about my own age, and had a right to be equally caressed; yet they thought it quite natural that their caresses should be exclusively bestowed on what they called my gentillesse. I was the real sovereign of Sillery, nothing was done without consulting me, all my desires were foreseen and provided for, and the very domestics of the house served me with a zeal they scarcely displayed for their masters. But I did not abuse my power, for I only employed it for the enjoyment of the company. I was happy at my situation, and affected by the kindness shown me, but I was not vain on that account. I was always in good humor and showed such deference to others, that they could never form the idea that I was desirous of ruling. In all the plans I formed for our amusement I took particular care to form previous arrangements with Mesdames de Louvois, de Sailly, de St. Chamand and my sister-in-law, to mingle their ideas with my own and to give them all the credit afterward;—and thus was I beloved. In after times, in other situations, I preserved the same disposition, but I was not equally fortunate.

During my stay here, I wrote a great many literary trifles and a song en pot-pourri, in eighteen couplets, to all kinds of common airs. I wrote eight of them and M. de Genlis the remainder. We sang them together, each stanza alternatively. I ardently pursued my studies in literature and natural history and made a great many extracts, for I was extremely fond of increasing my stores of this kind. The close of our residence here was troubled by a most dangerous and unaccountable

incident. On returning from a ride with M. de Puisieux one day at twelve o'clock, I entered the dinner-hall, where two buckets were always prepared before dinner, one with iced water, the other not iced, and called M. de Puisieux's water, as he drank no other; but though this was not my favorite, I was warm and thirsty and at the same time afraid of the iced water, so that I drank of M. de Puisieux's with wine and then returned to my room. I felt sick immediately, and only obtained relief after the most violent vomiting. This over, I felt no further effects, dressed, thought no more of it, nor did I even mention it before dinner. There I drank nothing but iced water. M. de Puisieux being rather indisposed took nothing but a little tisane, made in the kitchen and stayed in the drawing-room with his lady, who never sat down to table. While at dinner, the old Abbé de St. Pouen, a relation of Madame de Puisieux, left the table, complaining of a severe colic. Immediately after dinner, the Coadjuteur of Rheims, M. Tiquet and M. Genlis complained of heart-burn and they were the only persons who drank of the water that was not iced. They retired to the salon, but were obliged to leave it to relieve themselves. Suspicion fell on verdigris as the cause and all the saucepans were examined, but were found perfectly clean; and, at any rate, those who had not been attacked had partaken of every dish like the rest. As M. de Puisieux ate little himself and for more than fifteen years kept a very strict regime, he always thought that others ate too much and attributed the present symptoms of illness to previous indigestion; so that, instead of

consoling with the sick, he preached sobriety to them. In the meantime, M. de Genlis had a most violent fit of vomiting and poor Abbé de St. Pouen, who was seventy-four years old, was put to bed very ill; M. de Puisieux would have them to take nothing but warm water, while his lady sent to Rheims for a doctor. After much suffering, M. de Genlis would actually return to the drawing-room; in spite of me, but he was much altered and looked very poorly. A servant entered while M. de Puisieux was lecturing him on the sin of gormandizing and related that M. de Renac, (who had not been at dinner and was just returned that moment from hunting) had drank a glass of M. de Puisieux's water, which instantly made him ill, and that the same thing had happened to his servant. It was now evident that the water must have have been impregnated with poison and Madame de Puisieux ordered it to be thrown away immediately, which was done, while it ought to have been kept to be analysed. The doctor arrived and found poor Abbé de St. Pouen very badly, as well as Paul, M. de Puisieux's attendant, who, in passing through the dinner-hall, had twice drank of the dangerous liquid. The abbé took all the sacraments during the night, but he survived, notwithstanding. The doctor positively assured us that poison had been administered. For myself, I felt no further effects; M. de Tiquet drank so little water with his wine that he was very slightly indisposed; M. de Renac and his servant were more so, but not badly; the Coadjuteur and M. de Genlis suffered greatly and the abbé and M. de Puisieux's attendant were dangerously

ill. None of the company but them had drank of the water. The sick were ordered to drink *eau thériacle* and then to take nothing but milk for three days. We were busy only in imagining whence the poison came—but we thought it could not be accidental and the idea was terribly alarming. The maitre d'hotel, the faithful Milot, who had been almost frantic at the suspicion thrown on his saucepans, was ordered into the salon and asked how this horrible mystery could be cleared up; for we thought that some of the servants might have thrown something into the water, merely out of ill-will to one of the valets who were continually going backwards and forwards in the hall and drinking out of the buckets. M. de Puisieux told Milot to learn who had been in the hall, and Milot went out for the purpose. Each of the company then mentioned his servant's character and M. de Genlis said he was sure of his, but my brother-in-law owned that he could not say the same of his own, which made M. de Puisieux exclaim, "I believe you—you mind nothing but their size." In fact, he had a new one at that very time, called the giant on account of his height, which was about six feet.

When Milot came back, he addressed himself to my brother-in-law,—"Monsieur le Marquis," said he, "I believe it is the scoundrel of a giant who has done the deed."—"In this case," exclaimed my brother-in-law, "we must not let him escape;" and he indicated what precautions were necessary to prevent him disappearing, which M. de Tiquet went to put into execution. Milot continued his story, and said, that a cook was in the

court at eleven o'clock, and saw the giant come out of the hall; that having come up to him, to ask if he would play a game at quoits, he perceived that one of his ruffles was wet, and told him he had been dabbling in the buckets, which he denied, and said that he did not even know that there was water in the hall. "The villain!" exclaimed my brother-in-law, "it must be him—we must examine him ourselves, and then I will give him up to justice."

Let any one reflect on this incident. My brother-in-law was heir to the magnificent estate of Sillery, but his claim was set aside, and one of his servants poisons the water usually drank by the actual owner; and if M. de Puisieux, at his time of life, and with his delicate constitution had not that day been actually unwell, but had sat down to dinner and drank of the water, he who never took wine but with the dessert, it is most certain that death would immediately have ensued, and my brother-in-law would that evening have been possessor of Sillery. Yet such were the unsuspicious feelings of those times, that there was not, I will not say the slightest suspicion, but not even the idea that he could for a moment be affected by the consequences of the accident. Not a look was to be seen, not a word was heard that had any reference to him. No one thought he ought to be more uneasy or embarrassed than the rest of the company, and he never thought of it himself, which shows the high esteem in which he held the master of the castle. He examined the giant in the chamber of M. de Puisieux, in presence of that gentleman, M. Tiquet, and my husband.

The scoundrel denied everything, but my brother-in-law threatened to give him up to the vengeance of the law, if he did not instantly make a full confession. He then owned that he had put an emetic into the water, but denied putting poison. When strictly interrogated as to his motives, and why he had chosen the water that was not iced, he answered, that he had no intention of injuring his master. When his master strongly urged him to tell why he had acted thus towards others, he had the impudence to exclaim that it was not he who was heir to the estate. My brother-in-law was determined upon delivering him up to the police, but M. de Puisieux would not allow it; so that he was only turned away, with orders to leave the province immediately, and not to think of becoming anything but a soldier, for if he took service, he would be instantly reported. My brother-in-law made his livery be torn from his back, and burned before him, in the little wood called le Menil, for no servant, he told him, would wear it—he was then driven with ignominy from the house. We got over the accident, and had only to drink great quantities of milk for three days. The doctor always maintained that it was poison and not an emetic. At any rate, whoever could have given such a violent emetic, was equally capable of giving poison; or, perhaps, he thought, that an emetic would not leave such strong proofs of the crime. This singular event was much talked of in Paris, but produced not the slightest suspicion against my brother-in-law. In the meantime Milot put a padlock to the water buckets, and this precaution filled me with sadness, made me

always think of poison, so that the latter part of our stay was highly disagreeable.

We spent two or three days with Madame d'Egmont, at Braisne, on our way to Paris, where we stayed at the end of October.

During my stay at Sillery, I received several very affectionate letters from the Duke of Orleans. My aunt had returned from Barrège, and the waters had cured her of her unfortunate passion for the Duc de Guines. She did not say so, but she wrote me that solitude had restored her peace of mind—which I understood to signify that there was no longer anything to oppose her union with the Duke of Orleans.

I flew to my aunt immediately on my arrival, and she showed me as much confidence as her disposition would allow, for there was always some artifice and concealment in all her confidential communications. The duke offered to marry her secretly, but she displayed a reluctance, prompted, as she said, by her delicacy, which duped me for a time, but which was nothing else but a plan to increase her influence. She told the duke, that she was determined not to marry him, unless he had the consent of his son, the Duke de Chartres. This resolution she announced in such a dignified manner, that the duke was enchanted, and spoke of it to me with admiration. He was reckoned an excellent father, and whether this character be merited or not, those who enjoy it, like to preserve it as much as possible. Besides, the duke loved his son as much as a weak-headed man can love any one. He told him the secret immediately, and

strongly panegorized the magnanimity of Madame du Montesson. At this epoch they thought only of a conscientious, and consequently, a very private marriage. But the Duc de Chartres did not like her, for he thought her too affected, too forward, and too insinuating; and he saw the schemes she laid to entrap him, by flattery and a show of affection. To please him, she tried fits of extravagant gayety, bursts of laughter, and those childish and caressing ways, which he called *des mievreries* ridicules. This prince had a defect very injurious to a man of his rank—that of absolutely hating, not what was worthy of contempt and indignation, but what had not sufficient gracefulness and taste, or which he fancied ridiculous. His tact in this respect was very fine and correct. He respectfully but coldly answered the Duke of Orleans, that a son had no consent to offer to his father, and he went not beyond this. My aunt determined on speaking to him herself, and greatly embarrassed him by the affection she displayed, but, as she still persisted in asking his consent, he answered at length that he would give it with great pleasure, if he were sure his father's resolution was really fixed, which time only could show. She immediately exclaimed, that nothing would please her better than this certainty and a long trial, and proposed two years. The Duc de Chartres did not expect so long a delay would have been yielded, but he gracefully accepted the offer, adding that the whole must previously be approved of by his father. He told Madame de Montesson on leaving her, that he was going to the country for a few days, and requested him to

write to her the decision of the Duke of Orleans. He perceived that he wished her to bind herself by a written engagement. With the consent of the duke she wrote to him, and, in her letter (which I have seen) gave a solemn promise not to marry his father within the two years. The Duc de Chartres always preserved the letter, and eight months afterward wrote a note on the margin of the first page that gave my aunt great uneasiness.

Madame de Montesson pretended to be perfectly pleased with the Duc de Chartres, and told her confidants, that he had agreed to her marriage with his father, but she said nothing about the conditions. When the whole plan had been properly arranged, she lost no time in announcing to the Duke of Orleans, that she had formed another resolution, namely, that she would not marry him without the king's written consent, with a promise that the marriage should be kept private, and that she should not go to court, an illusive promise if she had children. The duke was not only surprised, but actually thunderstruck at this new pretension; he fruitlessly opposed it, but was forced to yield. My aunt was quite right on this point, for a clandestine marriage is really odious, when it springs, not from mutual love: I do not esteem the ambition by which she was guided, but in the whole of this affair, I find nothing very worthy of blame except the innumerable artifices she employed.

The dauphin (afterward the unfortunate Louis XVI.) had just been married; the marriage of monsieur was spoken of, and M. de Puisieux asked from the king the prom-

ise of a place for me as lady of honor to the future princess. The king promised, the Maréchal d'Etrée returned thanks, and I received the usual compliments on such occasions. My aunt made this an excuse to be present at court, where she had never been, though her birth gave her the privilege; but Mme. de Montesson would not allow it. She said, that since I was destined, by the situation promised me, to spend the greater part of my life at Versailles, she wished to go to court to see me oftener. This was done at the beginning of November, on my arrival in Paris, and long before what I have been stating. I went the day my aunt was presented, and was highly amused, for it was the very same day on which Madame du Barri was presented. We found her, in all quarters, splendidly and tastefully attired. In daylight, her face had lost all expression, and her complexion was spoiled by red colored stains. Her carriage was disgustingly impudent, and her features far from handsome; but she had beautiful fair hair, pretty teeth, and a pleasing physiognomy. She looked extremely well in the evening. We reached the evening card tables a few minutes before her. At her entrance, all the ladies near the door rushed forward in an opposite direction, so as not to be seated near her, so that, betwixt her and the last lady in the room, there was an interval of more than four or five empty places. She looked with the utmost coolness at this marked and singular movement, and nothing disturbed her unalterable impudence. When the king appeared at the end of the games, she looked to him with a smile, his eyes

rolled round the room in quest of her, but he seemed in ill humor and almost instantly retired. Public indignation was altogether unbounded at Versailles, for never had anything so openly indecent been heretofore displayed, not even the triumphs of Madame de Pompadour. It was certainly very strange to see the Marquise de Pompadour at court, while her husband, M. le Normant d'Etioles, was only a farmer-general; but it was infinitely more abominable to see a common prostitute pompously presented to the whole of the royal family. This, and many other instances of unparalleled indecency, powerfully assisted in degrading royalty in France, and, consequently, contributed to bring about the revolution.

We must go back to my aunt and the Duke of Orleans. The latter sincerely believed in the two years' delay, and saw nothing very pressing in the steps necessary to be taken with the king; he reckoned on not being called on to do anything for a long time, but my aunt told him that it was absolutely necessary, he should have the consent safely deposited in his pocket-book. Before taking this step, the duke confessed he had fears he had never displayed till now, and said, he was sure the king would not be favorable to his proposal, and, in fact, would positively refuse his consent. She maintained the contrary, and said, that when the king learned that the Duc de Chartres had highly approved of the private marriage, and his consent was strongly solicited by the Duke of Orleans, he could not possibly refuse. She thus made the duke answerable

A Garden Festival at Trianon, Versailles

From the painting by Louis Boulet

for the result; and this ought always to be done when an important commission is entrusted to persons of a weak mind, or of an indolent and sluggish disposition. Terribly afraid of my aunt's reproaches and ill-humor, the duke became determined out of sheer timidity. In fact, the king refused him very angrily at first, but when he insisted with much animation to obtain his object, he succeeded, after a long conversation, in obtaining his written consent, under the conditions that my aunt should not change her name, should never appear at court, and should claim none of the rights of a princess of the blood.

The duke returned in triumph to Paris, where we expected him with the utmost impatience. His look, at his arrival, announced such distinguished success, that I believe my aunt expected something a great deal better than had actually taken place. She had herself proposed the conditions; yet, when the duke enumerated the whole, I saw she was completely disappointed. Ambitious views make fancy take wilder flights even than love itself. Bernard, following Tasso, says that love

Desire tout, pretend peu, n'ose rien.

But in sober prose, we may justly assert that ambition desires everything, aspires after everything, dares everything.

My aunt was thoughtful and absent the whole of the day. She told him in the evening, that if the duke had known how to profit by the king's good will, he would have obtained the public declaration of his marriage,

with the single condition of her not appearing at court, that she might not have precedence of the princesses of the blood, as she had a right to have. Mentioning the duke, she spitefully said—" Everything must be hammered into him."

The duke thought Madame de Montesson's ill-humor a proof of strong sensibility, and nothing occurred to disturb his satisfaction. When we three were together, he never called me by any other name than his niece, and this title he did me the honor of giving me in three or four notes which he addressed to me. My aunt formed a plan she did not wish to entrust to me, and the particulars of what I am about to relate, I obtained solely from her other confidants, the Vicomte de La Tour du Pin and Monsigny, to whom the Duke of Orleans told all his secrets.

Madame de Montesson never intended seriously to wait two years; and the written promise she had given the Duc de Chartres had no effect on her plans. She had particularly warned the Duke of Orleans not to mention this circumstance to the king, for this single fact would have shown that the Duc de Chartres had only consented with regret to his father's marriage. After some hasty reflections, she told the duke that the king's consent was nothing, if he delayed to make use of it, that Louis XIV. had broken the promise he gave to Mademoiselle de Montpensier, and that still greater dangers might arise during such a long interval. The duke displayed a well-founded fear of his son's displeasure; but she answered that she would take every precaution to conceal the se-

cret from him, and at length it was settled that a private marriage should be concluded immediately. The archbishop was shown the king's consent, and it was he who gave them the nuptial blessing privately, in his chapel, at twelve o'clock at night. The witnesses were the Vicomte de la Tour du Pin and M. de Damas, the duke's chamberlains. They were pledged to secrecy, which they kept for three weeks, and broke only when Madame de Montesson's vanity had told the matter to several individuals, and when she had betrayed it in a thousand ways besides.

In imitation of Madame de Maintenon, who justly considered every title beneath her, and would have none after her marriage with Louis XIV., my aunt rejected the title of marquise she had hitherto borne, while she ordered her servants, and requested her friends, never to call her by any other name than simple Madame de Montesson. She persuaded the duke that there was great dignity in not concealing her real rank, and he caused his chamberlains to pay her the same homage as to a princess. The Duc de Chartres soon learned the truth, and as he was himself incapable of breaking his word, his anger was great; he had an interview with his father, in which he displayed so much indignation and resentment, that he put his father in a passion, and they were a fortnight without seeing each other. Madame de Montesson thought that no one could resist her insinuating talents, and obtained a private interview with the Duc de Chartres. She displayed abundance of fine feeling that was all to no purpose, and then endeavored to

show him that their common interest required their union; but the duke always replied with the most provoking coolness that he would always think it inexcusable for any one to give his word of honor voluntarily, and then break it in every point. He added, that such conduct destroyed every idea of future confidence, and on leaving her, said he should always preserve her written engagement, to which he would merely add an historical note. This he actually did; and though the note did not contain those insults or defamatory reflections attributed to it, it was sufficiently satirical. Hence arose Madame de Montesson's violent resentment against the Duc de Chartres, which had a very fatal influence over the destiny of that unfortunate prince.

I am anticipating events, for the Duke of Orleans did not marry my aunt till a month after my entry into the Palais Royal; but since I have already broken the order of time, I shall now finish all I have to say concerning the consequences of their marriage. The duke was very sorry at his son's displeasure, and told his deep chagrin to the faithful Monsigny, whom he justly esteemed, and who, under pretence of receiving orders for the duties connected with his office, had long interviews with him every morning, when the duke showed more confidence in him than he did in the most important individuals connected with his household. Monsigny went often also to visit my aunt, who required him to assist in repeating music; on leaving her he went to the duke, who always kept him to have some conversation. When setting out for Villers-Coterets, whither we were to go in eight days,

the duke desired Monsigny to intimate to me, that if I could engage the Duke de Chartres to be reconciled to my aunt, and to treat her affectionately she would settle the estate of Sainte-Assise upon my children, along with her splendid house in Paris, the whole of which might be worth from seventy to eighty thousand livres a year. Next morning Monsigny called, and gave me a note from the duke, merely desiring me to believe implicitly whatever should be said in his name, and to perform with zeal all he expected from my attachment towards him; and which he merited by his sincere and ardent friendship. He ended by asking for my answer in writing, which Monsigny would bring to Villers-Coterets three days after his arrival. Monsigny then told me all. This statement, I mean the proposal of this bargain, greatly hurt me, and I was highly offended at such stupid conduct on the part of the duke. I considered it a personal insult, and time has not changed my opinion; but I was indignant, and my reply but too clearly displayed it. My first impressions and feelings have always been kind and generous, but the vivacity of my ideas, and the liveliness of my imagination, have always mingled with my best actions something lofty, violent, and even extravagant, that has diminished their value, and has been (must, in fact, have been) exceedingly injurious to my interest and happiness. When greatness of mind alone prompts to a good action, calmness and simplicity predominate in the manner; but when vanity interferes with this sublime feeling, an unnatural display is given to its operation, and the whole is destroyed. I answered the Duke of Orleans

in a way that was not only not suitable to his rank, but that was really impertinent. After beginning, properly enough, my letter went on to say that I did not know any right I had to influence the mind of the Duc de Chartres; that, at any rate, he wanted no extraneous aid to show his respect and attachment to his father. But after disdainfully rejecting the very rude offer of securing me my aunt's inheritance, I added this phrase; I would not consider as lawful, nor would I accept any part of my aunt's property, except the family inheritance. I could not have said any thing more severe if my aunt had been the mistress of the Duke of Orleans; instead of that, she had become his wife with the king's consent, and had been married by the Archbishop of Paris! But though she was really the Duchess of Orleans, she could not assume the title; and I felt that in her place, with no rank to sustain, I should have gloried in being satisfied with forty thousand livres a year; should have refused all the extravagant gifts of the duke, two hundred thousand livres a year, and a splendid mansion, built for her, besides in the Chausée d'Antin, diamonds, plate, and other valuables. Madame de Maintenon would accept of nothing from Louis XIV., but my aunt was governed by different feelings, was excessively proud and avaricious; and so indignant was I at her extravagance and cupidity, that my dislike at her conduct assisted me not a little in making out a letter in so arrogant a tone. I firmly resolved that this letter, which I thought quite sublime, should never be employed in increasing my credit with the Duc de Chartres, and I faithfully kept my resolution, though

there was little merit in doing so, for he thought so little of people showing themselves off, and not acting from principle, that I would have lost his esteem had I boasted of this action, which it was also my duty to conceal from him, to prevent him becoming more and more irritated at his father. Hence, he never had the least idea of the subject. Desirous, however, of having a respectable witness of my conduct on this occasion, I showed the letter to the Duchess of Chartres, having first made her give me her word of honor that she would never say a word on the subject to the duke; and I knew that I could place implicit reliance on her word. This princess is six years younger than me, and should naturally survive me; she must certainly remember a fact that so greatly surprised her at the time.

The Duke of Orleans and my aunt were enraged at my letter, and neither of them ever pardoned it, yet without expecting any result, all my cares were devoted, along with those of the duchess, to soften the Duc de Chartres. He had declared that he would never again set foot in Madame de Montesson's house; yet he returned to it, and during several years supped there twice or three times every winter. This behavior (which I venture to say he never would have shown without my exertions) ought to have sufficed, for it was just and reasonable, but did not at all satisfy my aunt, who wished to be followed by admirers and flatterers. It is true, that the Duc de Chartres was not very fond of the coquetry and affectionate displays she occasionally played off before him. She irritated his father more and more against him. Mean-

while, she was continually complaining of him to her confidential friends, never mentioning a single positive instance, but sighing and using ambiguous language, so that her hearers might think what they pleased; this was her plan. It was thus she always made her complaints of me in a most sentimental tone, but without being able to bring forward a single incorrect proceeding. But the greatest fault of the Duc de Chartres was that he never had even the semblance of wrong in his conduct towards her; not even when his friend, M. de Fitz-James, among the rest, gave him notice that she took every opportunity of abusing his character and conduct. The most fatal prepossessions formed against this unfortunate prince, were raised by her machinations. Her resentment was so violent that many have thought it could only have arisen from a strong sentiment in his favor having been disdained; but this I believe to be wholly untrue. The Duc de Chartres was not a Hippolyte, nor did my aunt resemble Phedre, for she was only vehement in her self-love. To all this hatred, the duke opposed nothing but calmness, patience, and indifference. The two facts I am about to mention, I witnessed myself, as well as every one at the Palais Royal. One day at dinner we perceived that the silver covers were all different, and every one recognized his own arms on some of them. The duke asked the comptroller, Joli, what was the meaning of this, and in reply, he whispered something into his ear. After dinner, the duke told us that all the plate had been carried off to Sainte-Assise by order of the Duke of Orleans, because Madame de Montesson's were sent to the

jewelers to be altered, as they were old-fashioned. It is true, that the plate at the Palais Royal belonged to the Duke of Orleans, but this was an odd way of deposing of it without notice. One morning, the winter after, orders came to take away from the Duke and Duchess of Chartres all the diamonds called the family jewels, for the purpose of adorning a velvet dress, in which Madame de Montesson appeared several times during the winter. Such conduct was highly indecorous, yet the Duc de Chartres bore it with admirable patience and good temper.

I had several griefs of my own before I left my residence in the Rue Saint Dominique. The one that affected me most was the death of my kind and beloved grandmother, the Marquise de Droménil, for this worthy lady was really so in my affection and grateful remembrance. She was eighty-six years of age, yet I bewailed her, as if I could have expected to preserve her much longer. In her will she made no disposition in favor of any of her grandchildren in particular, but she left me the estate of Bouleuse, near Rheims, with a fine country-house, worth seven thousand livres a year. She added this clause: "In making this gift to the Comtesse de Genlis, I wish, on account of the affection I bear toward her, to be interred in the parish church of the estate." This will, so kind and honorable to me, was of no benefit, for it was set aside by M. de Noailles, the husband of Madame de Droménil's granddaughter. It had been drawn up by a notary, but there was some error in form, and M. de Noailles litigated the question and gained it. It was this M. de Noailles who afterward paid my marriage settle-

ment, that is to say, a hundred and twenty thousand francs, by giving two thousand francs' worth of assignats to the nation. M. de Genlis only obtained, like Madame de Noailles and Madame de Belzunce, his own portion, and we lost together the estate of Bouleuse, which, independent of right, had been bequeathed to me; but I always preserved the same grateful feeling for the donor, and Madame de Droménil will ever live in my remembrance as a mother and a benefactress.

At this time occurred an incident which shows the great utility of M. Tissot's book (*Avis au peuple sur sa santé.*) We kept in the house an Italian abbé, who read Tasso with me, was an excellent musician, and played extremely well on the piano. On returning home one evening we were told that he was dangerously ill of the cholera-morbus, and that the physician he had sent for (a M. Soulier) had prescribed wine and treacle mixed together. As I had often practiced medicine at Genlis, and even at Sillery, I knew M. Tissot's book by heart, and said I was sure that it condemned such a prescription. We took the book, and saw with great alarm, that M. Tissot said it was sometimes given by ignorant physicians, but that it was the same thing as firing a pistol at the patient's head. It is wonderful that a physician should be so brutally ignorant, and should not have read Tissot. But such was the case; the poor abbé called for the sacraments, and took extreme unction at ten o'clock that night. M. de Genlis and I were present. He died half an hour afterward. I was so struck with his look, that I told M. de Genlis I could not think

of passing the night under the same roof, and he agreed to let me go to sleep at the house of Madame de Balincour. Horses were put to the carriage, and I set off immediately. The family of M. de Balincour were delighted though surprised at seeing me, and he gave me up his own room, where I went to bed at half past twelve o'clock. I had fallen asleep in a few minutes, but was awakened by the merry voice of M. de Balincour, who had entered my room in the dark (for I kept no light in my room at night,) and was singing a very gay and laughable couplet to the air of La Baronne, while I heard the whispering of five or six persons who had glided in likewise. As we never forget what has highly amused us, I recollect perfectly the whole of the couplet :—

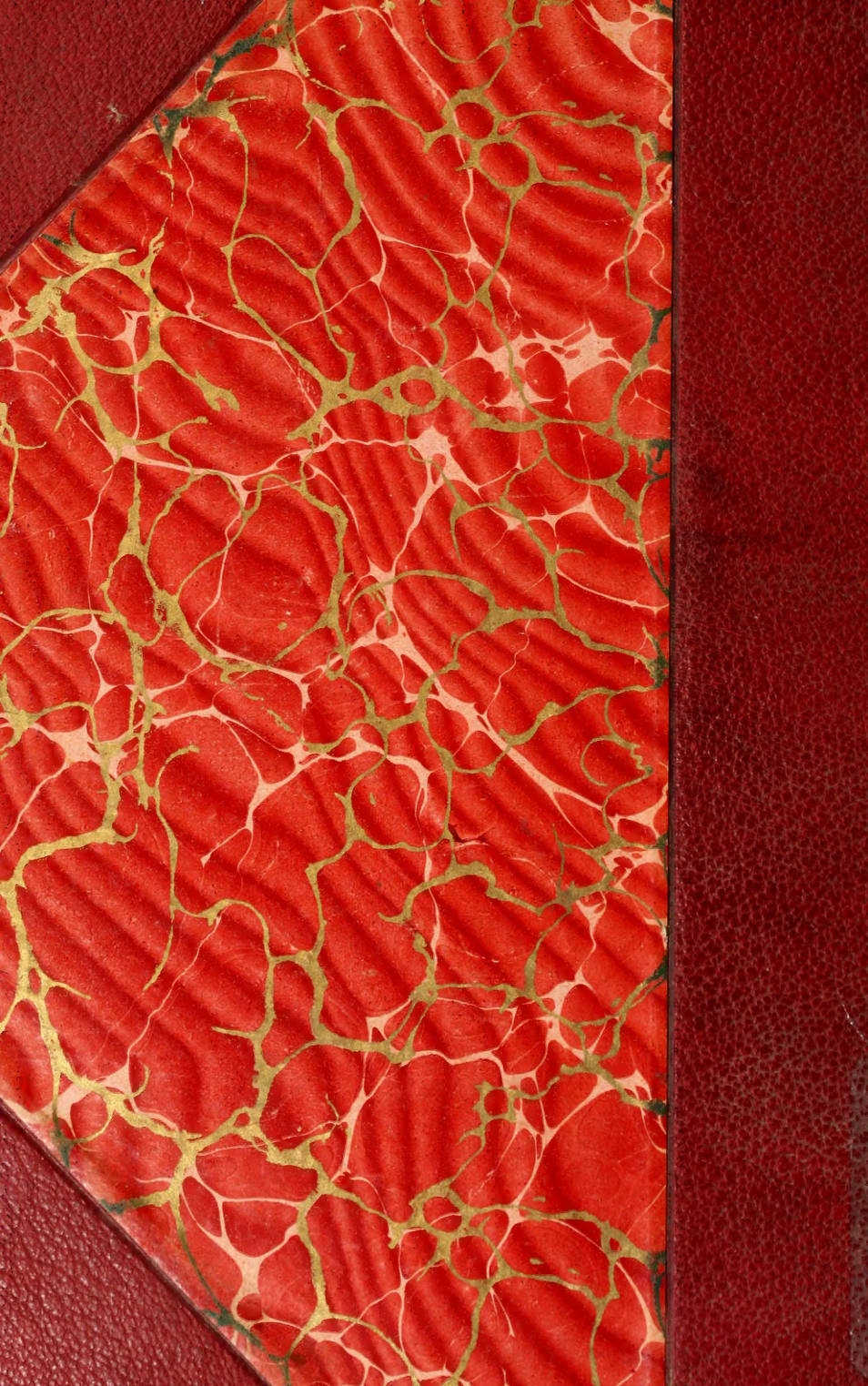
Dans mon alcove
Je m'arracherai les cheveux, (bis)
Je sens que je deviendraie chauvre
Si je n'obtiens ce que je veux
Dans mon alcove.

After a moment's reflection, I replied by the following impromptu, to the same tune—but to understand it, I ought to mention that M. de Balincour had nearly lost all his hair :—

Dans votre alcove,
Moderez l'ardeur de vos feux
Car enfin pour devenir chauvre
Il faudrait avoir des cheveux
Dans votre alcove.

My reply caused a general laugh, and delighted them greatly. When lights were brought, Madame de Balin-

cour and Madame de Ranché, her husband's sister, a handsome, charming woman, rushed toward my bed, while M. de Balincour and the rest of the company formed a circle around it. We conversed, and said a thousand amusing things till three in the morning, when M. de Balincour went out, and came back in a moment dressed like a pastry cook, with a large basket full of sweetmeats, fruits and preserves. We kept up the frolic till five in the morning, for M. de Balincour detained us more than half an hour in proposing all kinds of amusements, as violins, magic lanterns, and puppet shows; but at last they allowed me to sleep, which I did till twelve o'clock, and was only awakened by further tricks on the part of M. de Balincour. When M. de Genlis came for me he was also detained, and they would not let us go for five whole days. M. de Genlis entered fully into M. de Balincour's views, wrote twenty couplets of songs, and dressed in all kinds of characters; while we had balls, went to the theatres, to the fair, the halle, played at childish games, had concerts, and enjoyed an uninterrupted series of amusements. Never in the course of my life were five days so noisily spent. The Maréchal de Balincour was about seventy years of age, though he did not appear to be more than fifty-five. His height was majestic, his shape very fine, and his look stern and noble. Brutus was said to be the last of the Romans; and the marshal might be said to be the last fanatic of royalty in France, for he never gave a thought to politics or forms of governments in the course of his life. His real vocation lay in making a figure at court,

in being decorated with a blue ribbon, in speaking with grace and dignity to a king, in being acquainted with, and in feeling the different degrees of respect to be paid to the sovereign, and the princes of the blood, and the attentions due to a man of quality, as well as the dignified manner appropriate to a man of high rank. All his fine taste; all his knowledge of etiquette, all his graces, would have been destroyed by the system of equality. He worshipped the king, because he was king; he might have said what Montaigne said to his friend, la Boetie, "I love him because I love him, because he is what he is and I am what I am." The marshal, in different language, gave the same explanation of his strong attachment to the king. It was most amusing, even then, to hear him speaking of republics, for he considered republicans as a sort of barbarians. In other respects he was a man of great good sense, of an upright and open disposition, evidently marked in his fine features, had shown the most distinguished gallantry in war, and was adored by the Gardes Françaises, whose colonel he was.

THE END.